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cash box international magazine

The Independent Amusement Machine Industry Magazine

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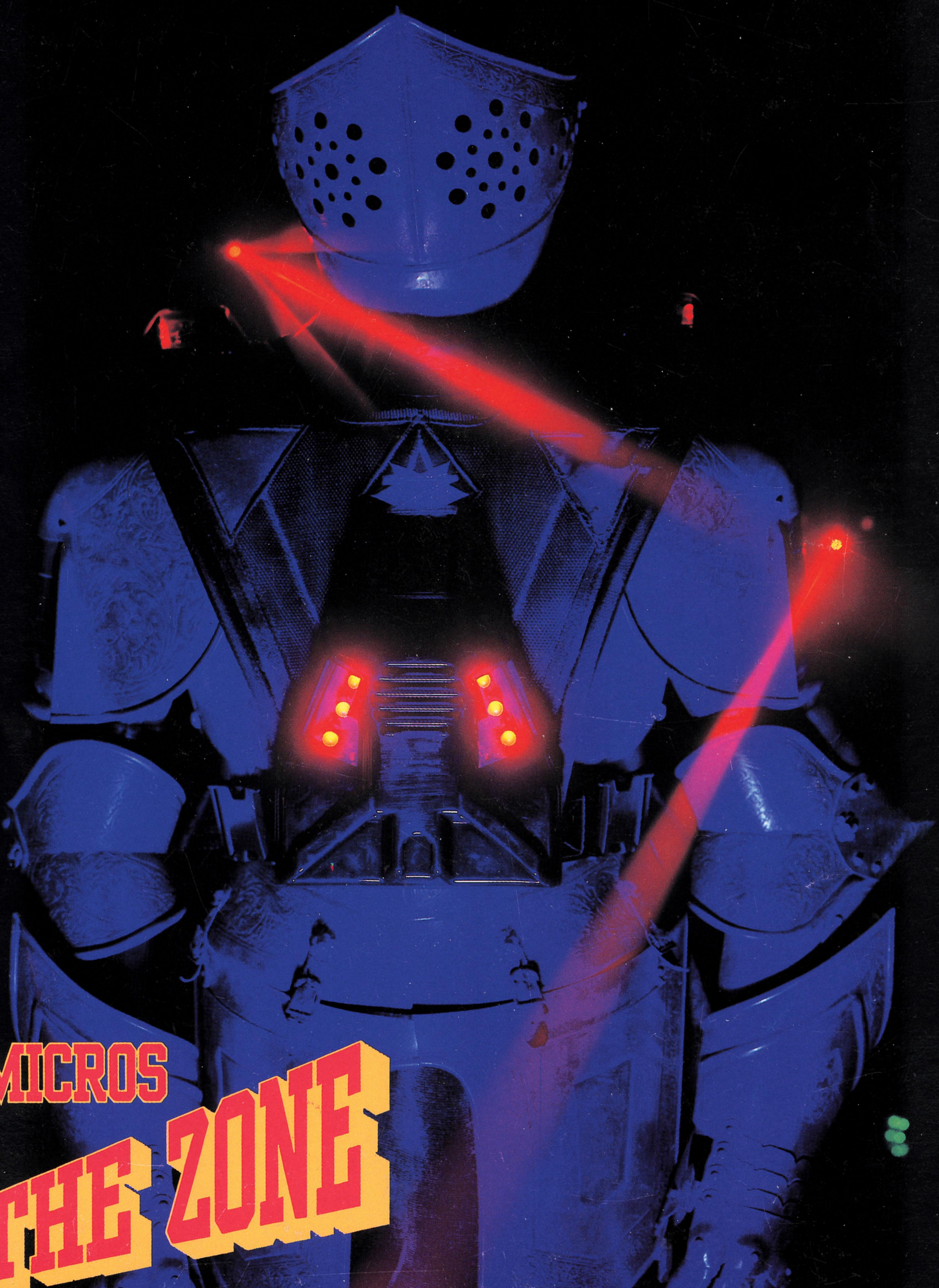

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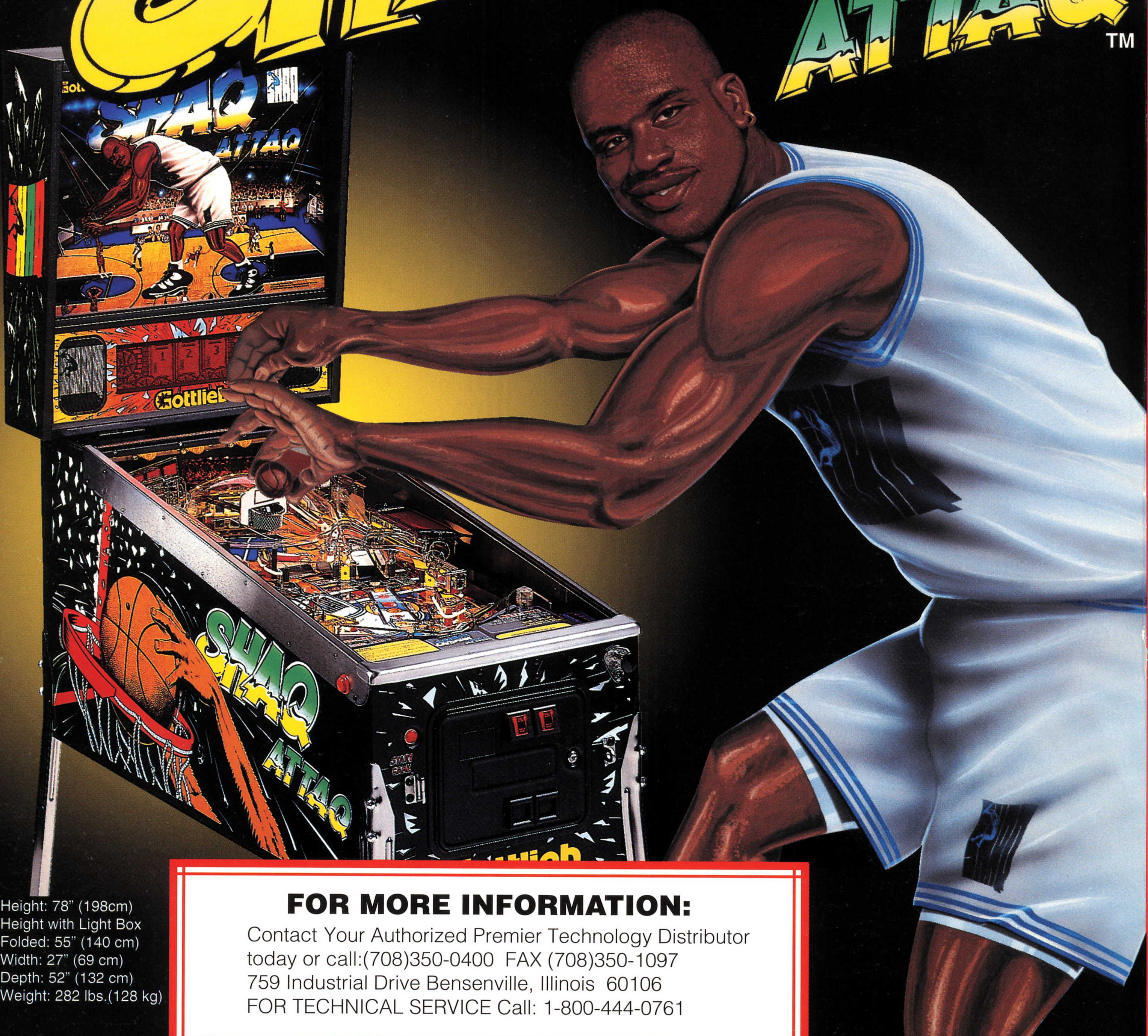
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AUSTRALIA / JAPAN

SEGA CLAIMING COPYRIGHT BREACH ON VIRTUA COP IN EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS LITIGATION

VIRTUA COP
POLICE
ICE

Sega Enterprises Ltd of Japan, in conjunction with Leisure & Allied Industries (LAI) who claim exclusive distribution have served a Statement of Claim on Australian operators/ distributors, Galaxy Electronics Pty Ltd and Gottlieb Electronics Pty Ltd for infringing on Sega's Copyright, by operating and showing for sale, *genuine, Sega made*, Virtua Cop and Daytona Twin machines.

This is the opening gambit in a game of extremely high stakes as the ensuing litigation will have far reaching effects on everyone involved in the coin-op industry in Australia.

And the Australian industry was quick to realize this with the National operators association (NAMOA) moving within 24 hours of the claim being served, to take over the coordination of the defence to the claim, and every distributor of note in the country contacted by CBI, pledging financial support.

Exclusive rights that give one operator a monopoly of a major product, in a country as big as Australia have long been a problem so it wasn't surprising to see the NAMOA and Australia's distributors quickly change this case from being Sega and LAI vs Galaxy & Gottlieb, *to Sega and LAI vs The Rest of the Australian Coin-op Industry.*

Daytona Twins, the subject of one claim, have been parallel imported into Australia in numbers never before seen, estimates vary, but it seems certain that there are over 400 pieces in operation at time of writing. Of these, and once again it's an estimate, around 120 pieces appear to have been supplied by LAI.

Prices have averaged around AUD$36,000 (US$28,000) owing to the competition between importing distributors and LAI subsequently sold at much the same price, where going on past pricing structures the company has put in place on products that they have been able to enforce exclusivity, it's reasonable to assume their price for Daytona Twin would have been much higher.

It's academic now, as going on past performances, LAI could not have sold 400 pieces at a higher price, but had they sold the 280 odd machines imported by independents, they would be in receipt of many millions of dollars in additional revenue.

As we said, the stakes are high.

Sega's stance is harder to understand, one would think that Sega, the world's leading game maker is in business to sell games. With what was virtually an open market operating in Australia, they sold an estimated, extra 250 pieces of Daytona Twin into the market than they would have under a distributor with a monopoly on the product.

That adds up to sales of around ¥375 million, surely a bonus of substance to any game manufacturer, and one that you would think a public company such as Sega would have trouble explaining to their shareholders if they were to deliberately deny their company the chance of getting it.

Just two such products a year could cost Sega which had a poor profit result last year some *three quarters of a billion yen* in revenue and one can only guess how Mr Nakayama will explain that to his shareholders when the company's share price is dropping as it currently is.

CBI feels that Sega shareholders have a right to know what's happening 'down under' and we are currently working on having letters published in the Japanese financial Press to inform them.

On our form guide Sega have not been a winning performer in Courts around the world over recent years and if they think or have been advised that this one will be a 'walkover'........ ....*we've got news for them.*

CASH BOX STANCE

It is only proper that Cash Box makes it's stance on the Sega/LAI vs Galaxy Electronics matter known.

There is a school of thought that says trade magazines such as ours should report the facts impartially and basically without opinion.

As Editor of CBI, I do not agree with that concept and make no apology for being completely on the side of the independent Australian operators in this matter and adamantly opposed to the action taken by Sega and LAI. We will report the facts, and report them fairly, but will also voice our opinions.

I see the granting of exclusive rights in this industry, on stand out games like Daytona and Virtua Cop, to a country's largest operator of amusement machines, who's also a distributor, as the granting of a monopoly, a monopoly that gives them a grossly unfair advantage over other operators who are forced to buy from them to compete.

That putting the magazine on the side of the operators, puts us on a collision course with both these big, powerful companies, comes under the "tough luck" category, we've been there before and always found it's much easier to look yourself in the face in a mirror, when you do what you believe is right.

Jack Rodios
Editor CBI

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SPOTLIGHT ON JAPAN

OUTLOOK 1995

Japanese manufacturers in general are still coming to grips with the poor profits recorded in 1994 for there to be any great degree of optimism for 1995, but most are still talking up expectations of a better year.

Just how this is going to be achieved with the home game industry having just had it's poorest Christmas sales for many years, and showing no real signs of picking up, is beyond many financial analysts, but then many of these number crunching types are not really familiar with the dynamics of this industry and what a huge difference a couple of top games can make.

Those that do have some knowledge of the industry are pretty confident about the coin-op side of things, saying that *"though there are definite problems present and looming in the home game sector which will have varying effects on manufacturers coin-op divisions, there is no reason to suspect at this stage that R&D on coin-op products will be cut significantly, and whilever there is continued R&D there will be good, profitable games produced. Profitable for the operator, and for the manufacturer."*

In operations there appears to be consensus that the huge growth over recent years has almost reached it's limit and though there will be many large, new locations of high quality opened in 1995, a considerably larger number of smaller arcades that do not have the space or resources to expand, will be forced to close down.

1994 CHART TOPPERS

Game Machine Magazine's chart toppers for 1994 which come from a compilation of the years charts, placed Ridge Racer DX at a clear #1 in dedicated games with 3265 points, ahead of Virtua Fighter (2909) and Lethal Enforcers (2713) Daytona USA DX came in at 5th and the Twin Daytona did not rate owing to it's release time.

namco
RIDGE RACER
TWIN TURBO
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In conversion video, Puyo Puyo, a Japanese game was first with SFII Turbo at #2 on 3197 points, Virtua Fighter (2948) and Raiden II (2718)

Pinballs were led by Lethal Weapon 3, Star Wars and Jurassic Park

KONAMI IN KOREA

Konami Co who had a dreadful 1994, has reportedly established a joint venture company in Korea similar to their Taiwanese operation.

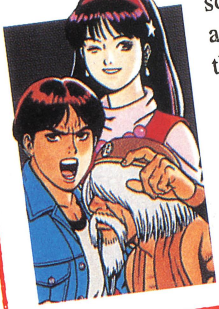
The company is looking primarily to increase sales of consumer and coin-op products, but are also planning arcade operations.

Though Konami are known to be keen to manufacture outside of their home country, there are no plans to set up a manufacturing facility in Korea or Taiwan

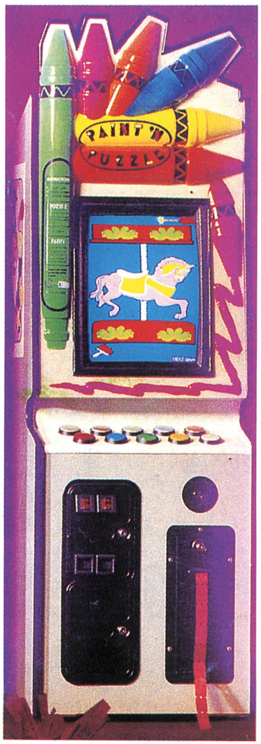
JAPAN

SNK REVERSE PROFIT TREND

While most of it's competitors are wallowing in red ink from the losses of 1994, SNK, a private company that are not obliged to report their results, socked it to them when they announced a profit of ¥4,316 million up 243% for the year ending September 30th.



Coin-op sales through the Neo Geo system were the main contributor and games like King of Fighters '94 and Samurai Shodown II are expected to ensure that SNK's profit trend will continue this year



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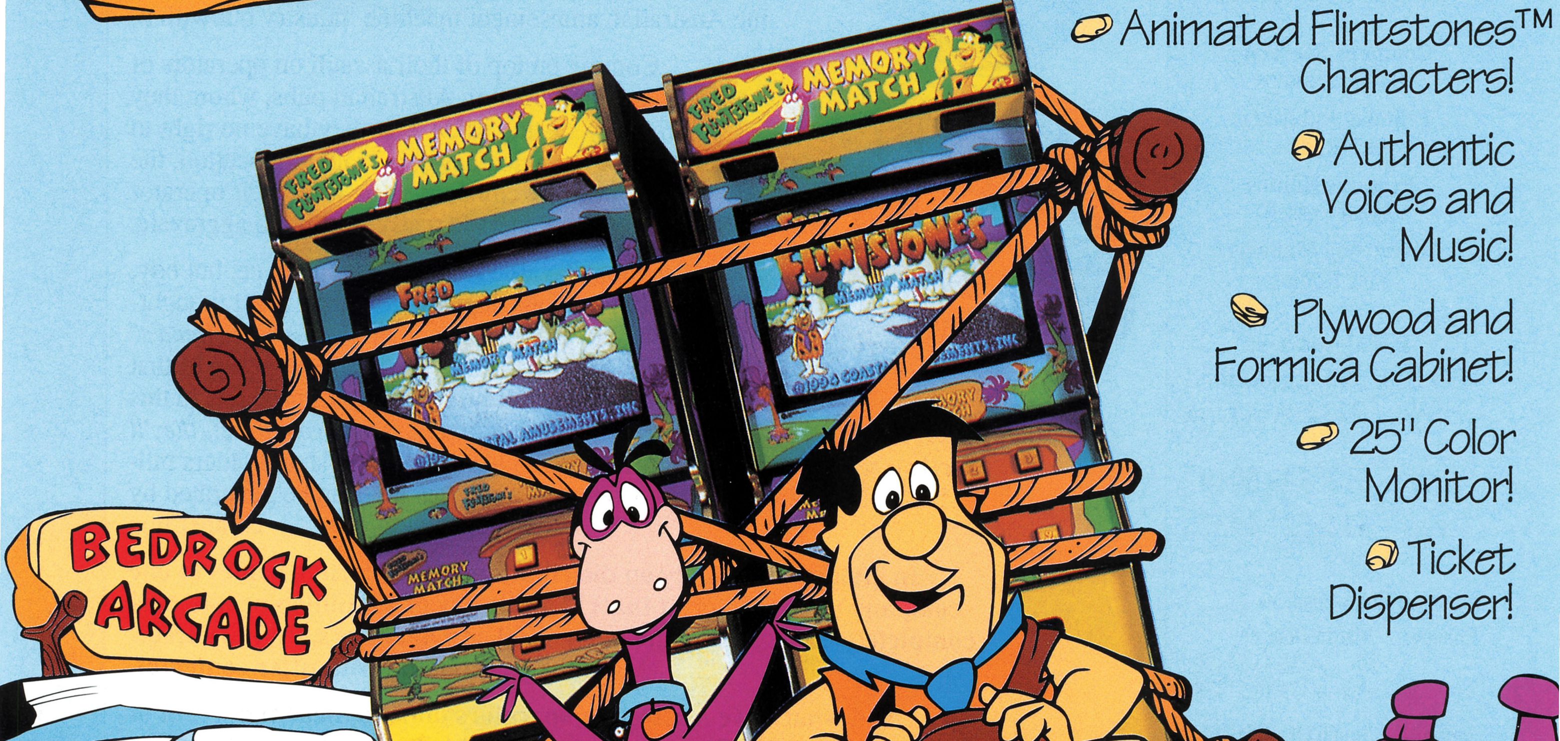
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Tellin' it like it is

With
Jack Rodios

Who the Hell do Sega Enterprises think they are?

Their latest effort in Australia, a couple of days before Christmas in supporting a monopoly on distribution of games like Daytona Twin and Virtua Cop, by one operator in a land of around 1600 operators, not only throws common sense out the window, but throws the Australian amusement machine industry out with it.

Coming on top of their assault on operators of amusement equipment in Australian pubs, whom they are greedily casting aside as if they have no right to operate once Sega decides they want the location, the way this power crazy company is treating their operator customers is really starting to aggravate.

They may be able to make a great game, but boy, some of their actions depict them as the most thoughtless, selfish, and arrogant bunch of *"expletive deleted's"* this industry has ever seen. And dopey on top of that 'cause they're not protecting their products in this matter, *the only risk to their products is that in a competitive market, they'll sell more of them*, what they *are* doing, is costing their shareholders millions of dollars in revenue from the extra sales that can be generated by competition

In giving a monopoly on distribution of their prime games to one company (an operator at that) in a country of 17 million people, and completely disregarding the other 1600 odd operators, they are treating their customers with utter contempt.

And what have Australian operators done to incur the wrath of Sega and end up in Court? ....I'll tell you what they've done.

They've simply bought and operated *genuine Sega games, built in genuine Sega factories and sold in the first instance by Sega sales people*

And for committing this 'ghastly crime', Sega are saying, *NO! you can't buy our games off a reputable dealer of your choice at a competitive and reasonable price, you can only buy them off our exclusive distributor buddy, whoever he may be, and at whatever price he likes to charge.*

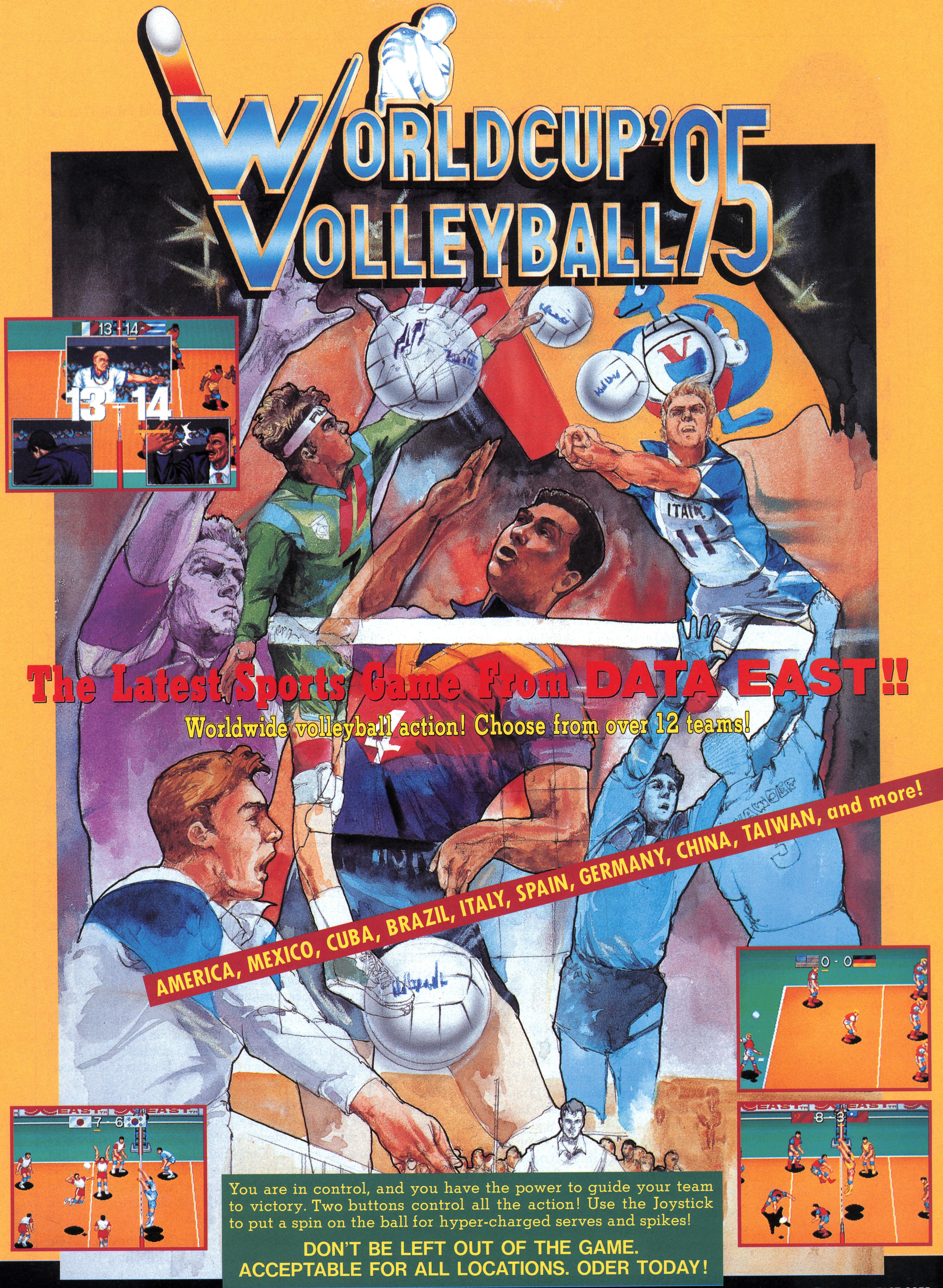
Basically, ***"Rack off, we don't want to know you and anyway, what right have you ordinary operators got to buy at a competitive price?"***

Little wonder that in less than 24 hours after the legal proceedings were commenced the rest of the Australian industry had united in a way that would surely have surprised the poorly advised Sega Enterprises.

No pussyfooting or procrastinating like there was in the Mothers Imports case which ultimately freed up parallel imports, but an instantaneous marshalling of funds and forces that will give Sega and the distributor the fight of their lives and hopefully, the 'whupping' that I believe they richly deserve. Exclusive rights on "must have" products in an industry such as ours is a pox that has to be eradicated.

The Courts will ultimately decide this issue and Australian operators will have to abide by the decision, but even if Sega win the legal fight, they're going to lose a Hell of a lot more in the marketplace than they will ever gain by winning in the Court.

WORLDCUP '95 VOLLEYBALL



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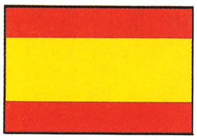

Lo digo tal cuales

¿Quién diablos se piensa qué es la empresa Sega?

En Australia, un par de dias antes de las Navidades su último esfuerzo fue apoyar el monopolio de la distribución de jeugos como "Daytona Twin" y "Virtua Cop", los cuales serían distribuídos solamente por un agente en un territorio donde hay aproximádamente 1600 agentes, esto no es ya tan sólo prescindir del sentido común, si no también tirar a hundir la industria australiana de las máquinas tragamonedas.

Los agentes distribuidores de equipos se diversiones de los bares (pubs) australianos, están en la linea de fuego, empujados a un lado sin miramientos por Sega, como si una vez que esta compañía decide que quiere ese negocio, aquéllos no tuviesen derecho o operar. Esta compañía enloquecida por el poder, trata cada vez peor a sus agentes distribuidores y también a sus clientes.

Puede que sean realmente capaces de presentar un juego fabuloso, pero hijo mío, algunas de sus acciones los pinta como el grupo de gente más desconsiderada, egoísta y arrogante, por no decir una palabrota, que esta industria haya visto. Y encima de esto, son estúpidos, ya que en este caso no están protegiendo sus productos, ya que el único riesgo que correrían los mismos en un mercado competitivo es el de venderse más. Esto que están haciendo les cuesta a sus accionistas millones de dólares en ganancias que las ventas extras les producirían si compitieran.

Al darle a una sola compañía (un agente distribuidor) el monopolio de la distribución de sus mejores juegos en un pais de 17 millones de habitantes, y olvidarse por completo de los otros 1600 y pico agentes distribuidores, están tratando a sus clientes con absoluto desprecio.

¿Qué han hecho los agentes distribuidores australianos para despertar la cólera de Sega y terminar en el tribunal? .... Les diré que han hecho.

Sencillamente comprar y distribuir juegos Sega genuinos, fabricados en fábricas Segas genuinas, que en primer lugar, los vendedores de Sega vendieron.

Y por haber cometido este "crimen tan horrendo", Sega ha dicho,¡NO! comadres, Uds. no pueden comprar nuestros juegos de un vendedor reconocido a un precio razonable y competitivo y por elección propia, ustedes los pueden adquirir solamente de nuestro distribuidor exclusivo, no importa quién sea, ni el precio que le cobre.

Prácticamente, "piérdanse", no nos interesa saber quiénes son ustedes, y de todas maneras, ¿qué derecho tienen, ustedes, simples agentes a comprar a un precio competitivo?

No es extraño entonces, que menos de 24 horas después de comenzar el procedimiento judicial el resto de la industria australiana se haya unido a la causa de tal manera, lo que seguramente ha sorprendido a la empresa Sega, pobremente asesorada en materia legal.

Sin tacto, sin las dilaciones a las que se atuvieron en el caso de "Mothers Imports", que con el tiempo liberalizó importaciones paralelas, empleando instantáneamente un ejército de fondos y recursos que darán a Sega y al distribuidor la oportunidad de sus vidas y espero "la paliza" que tan tanto merecen. Dentro de una industria como la nuestra los derechos exclusivos en productos "imprescindibles", es una epidemia que debe ser erradicada.

Con el tiempo los tribunales decidirán el asunto y los agentes australianos tendrán que aceptar el fallo, pero aunque Sega gane legalmente la pelea, perderán mucho más en el mercado que lo que ganarían de ganar en el tribunal.

Das Kind beim Namen nennen

Fuer wen zum Teufel halten sich Sega Enterprises?

Ihre neueste Leistung in Australien, nur ein paar Tage vor Weihnachten, als sie ein Monopol fuer die Verteilung von Spielen wie Daytona Twin und Virtua Cop durch einen Betreiber unterstuetzten, in einem Land, wo es ungefaehr 100 Bertreiber gibt, wirft nicht nur den gesunden Menschenverstand aus dem Fenster sondern gleichzeitig auch die australische Vergnuegungsauto-matenindustrie.

So wie es zusaetzlich zu ihrem Angriff auf die Betreiber von Vergnuegungseinrichtungen in australischen Gasthaeusern (pubs) kommt, die sie geizig bei Seite schieben als haetten sie keinerlei Recht, die Automaten zu bertreiben, wenn Sega einmal entscheidet, dass sie die Oertlichkeit selbst haben wollen, faengt die Art und Weise, wie diese von Macht besessene Firma ihre betreibenden Kunden behandelt, an, sehr aergerlich zu werden.

Sie moegen ja faehig sein, ein grossartiges Spiel herzustellen, aber, Junge, Junge, ein Teil ihrer Handlungen bezeugen, dass sie die ruecksichtslosesten, selbstsuechtigsten und arrogantesten Haufen von "gestrichenes Fluchwort" (expletive deleteds), die diese Industrie je gesehen hat, sind. Und doof noch dazu, weil sie ihre Produkte auf diese Weise nicht schuetzen; das einzige Risiko fuer ihre Produkte ist, dass sie in einem konkurierenden Markt mehr davon verkaufen werden; was sie tun, kostet ihre Aktionaere Millionen Dollar in Einnahmen von den Extraverkaeufen,die durch den Wettbewerb erzielt werden koennen.

Dadurch, dass sie das Monopol fuer die Verteilung ihrer wichtigsten Spiele einer Firma (und noch dazu einem Bertreiber) ueberlassen und den weiteren ungefaehr 1600 Betreibern keinerlei Beachtung schenken, behandeln sie ihre Kunden mit aeusserster Geringschaetzung.

Und was haben die australischen Betreiber getan, um den Zorn von Sega auf sich zu laden und im Gericht zu landen? .... Ich werde Ihnen sagen, was sie getan haben.

Sie haben ganz einfach echte Sega Spiele gekauft und betrieben, die in echten Sega-Fabriken hergestellt und von Sega Verkaeufern direkt verkauft worden sind.

Und dafuer, dass sie dieses "entsetzliche Verbrechen" begangen haben, sagt Sega: NEIN! Sie duerfen unsere Spiele nicht mehr von einem geachteten Haendler Ihrer Wahl zu einem konkurrenzfaehigen und angemessenen Preise kaufen, Sie koennen sie nur von unseremKumpel, dem exklusiven Verteiler kaufen, wer immer das sein mag und was immer der Preis ist, den er dafuer verlangen mag.

Imgrunde: "Verschwinde, wir wollen mit Ihnen nichts zu tun haben, und sowieso, was fuer ein Recht habt ihr gewoehnlichen Betreiber, zu einem konkurrenzfaehigen Preis zu kaufen?"

Es braucht niemanden zu verwundern, dass in weniger als 24 Stunden, nachdem das gerichtliche Verfahren eingeleitet worden ist, sich der Rest der australischen Industrie in einer Weise vereinigt hat, die sicherlich die schlecht beratenen Sega Enterprises ueberraschen hat.

Kein Leisetreten oder Zaudern, wie es in dem Mothers Imports-Fall war, der am Ende parallele Imports freimachte, sondern ein sofortiges Bereitstellen von Mitteln und Kraeften, die Sega und dem Verteiler den Kampf ihres Lebens liefern werden und hoffentlich die Pruegel, von denen ich glaube, dass sie sie so reichlich verdienen. Exklusive Rechte auf Produkte, die man "haben muss" in einer Industrie wie der unsrigen ist ein Gewaechs, das entfernt werden muss.

Am Ende werden die Gerichte diese Frage entscheiden, und die australischen Betreiber werden die Entscheidung befolgen, aber selbst wenn Sega den Rechtsstreit gewinnen, werden sie im Markt unendlich viel mehr verlieren als sie jemals durch einen Gewinn im Gericht erreichen.

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ATARI EXECUTIVE SEES THE PCB AND UNIVERSAL CABINET ERA AS BEING OVER

Pat Pickham (centre) and David Smith (right) accepting the ISO 9002 certificate from MP, Michael Ferris

At an impressive function in Tipperary where Atari Games (Ireland) were awarded the coveted ISO 9002 certification* for product manufactured at the Tipperary facility, company executive, David Smith gave a good indication of the direction that Atari see the industry going, by stating that he considered the PCB and universal video cabinet market were finished.

He added that though they could see a slight upturn in demand for dedicated video games in the more sophisticated locations, Atari were moving into the production of redemption games and possibly Kiddie Rides, two areas that they could see a bright future for.

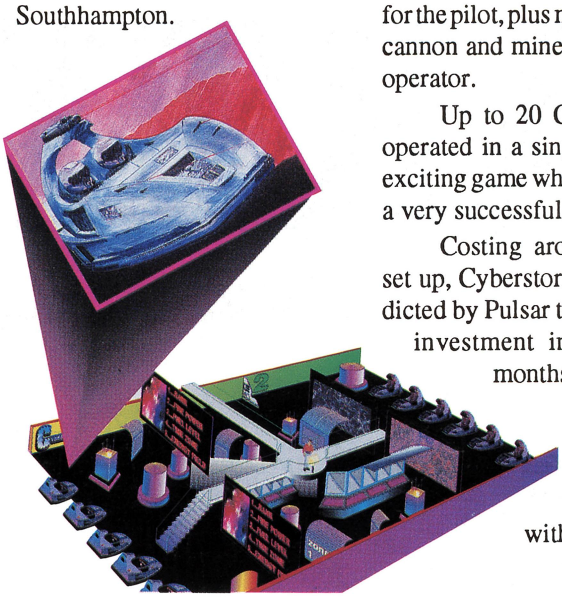
Atari Games, through their parent company, Time Warner, are well positioned for both the markets mentioned with their big library of cartoon characters and what David Smith termed a "huge R&D programme"

**The ISO 9002 certification is a monitored, quality standard, that is very highly regarded in Europe and other parts of the world. Atari Games become the first major manufacturer of coin operated amusement games to be so certified.*

ENGLAND

PULSAR MOBILISE LASER GAMES

UK company, Pulsar International Ltd, makers of Laser combat games have opened their first Cyberstorm centre in Southhampton.

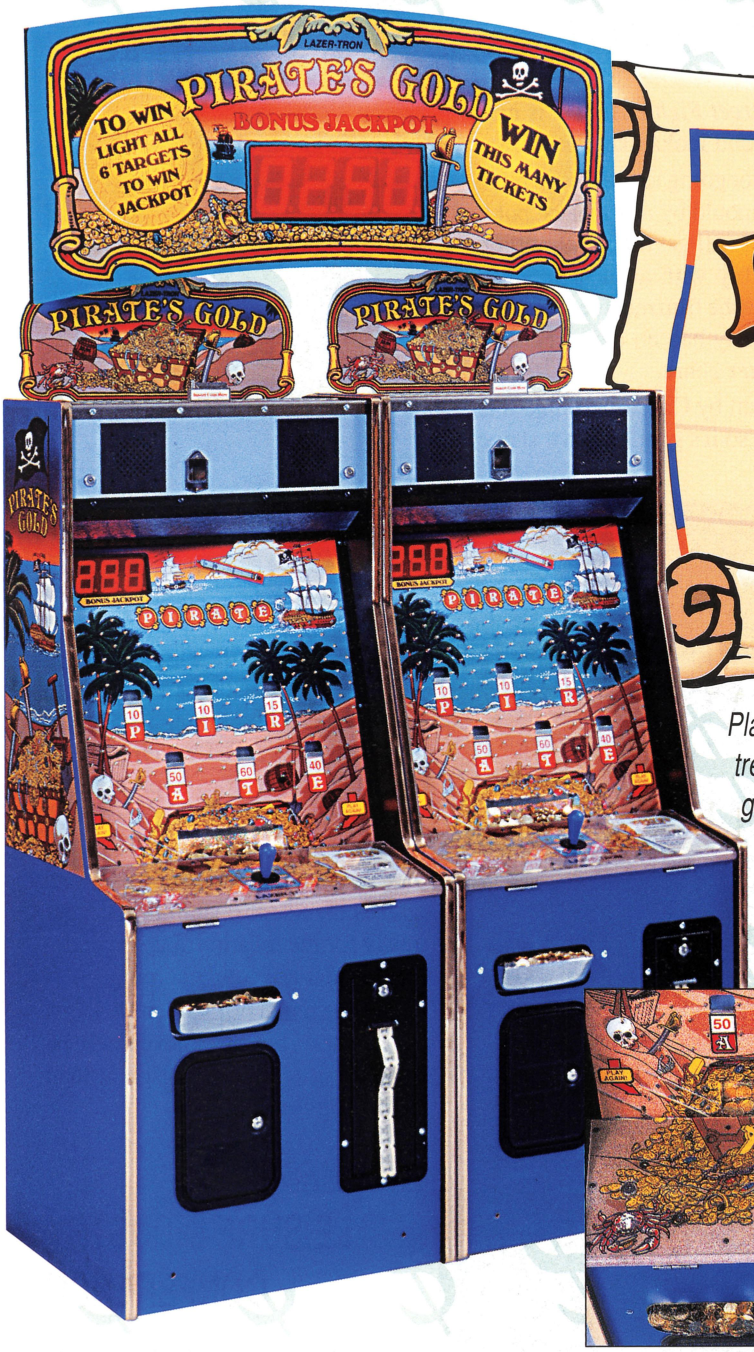


Cyberstorm is a Laser game that features two player vehicles called "Cyberpods" that are packed with computer driven command aids for the pilot, plus multiple laser guns, cannon and mines for the weapons operator.

Up to 20 Cyberpods can be operated in a single session of the exciting game which seems set to be a very successful concept.

Costing around £250,000 to set up, Cyberstorm is publicly predicted by Pulsar to return the initial investment in seven to eight months, but the company actually expect a good location to be making a profit over cost within six months.

You'll Strike It RICH with This Treasure


LAZER-TRON
PIRATE'S GOLD
BONUS JACKPOT
TO WIN LIGHT ALL 6 TARGETS TO WIN JACKPOT
WIN THIS MANY TICKETS
PIRATE'S GOLD
PIRATE'S GOLD
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PIRATE

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NEW FROM

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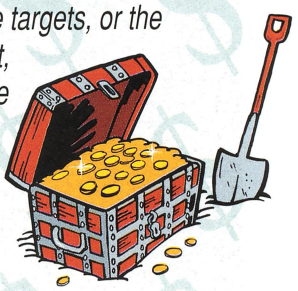
Pirates Gold features a unique play till you win style which insures that every player is a winner. If the player's coin does not go into one of the targets, or the treasure chest, the coin will be returned to the player to be played again.



50 A
60 T
40 E
PLAY AGAIN
PLAY AGAIN
PIRATE'S GOLD
LAZER-TRON

Treasure chest jackpot

INNOVATORS IN REDEMPTION!

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Cash Box Magazine *February, 1995*

◆ *Taito have released their very good follow up to Bubble Bobble which is titled in most country's Bubble Symphony, in a Neo Geo version as well as their own F3 Package system. Good little game this one and worth checking out.*

STREET FIGHTER DOES WELL AT BOX OFFICE AS NEW GAME IS READY FOR MARKET

Capcom's *Street Fighter* movie is now in world cinemas and looks like doing OK.

The film is not going to be a mega hit in the Jurassic Park mould by any means, but it looks like Capcom will get their $40 million or so back, probably with a bit of interest, despite the panning the film received by some critics who obviously had no understanding of the *Street Fighter* genre.

Pretty big punt by Capcom to fund this film on their own, so it's good to see it shape up so promisingly

Action hero Claude Van Damm and Kylie Minogue in a scene from the Street Fighter movie and who are also reported to feature in the new SF game

We believe the digitised *Street Fighter* game that was filmed with the movie and built in the USA will be released at ATEI which is opening as this issue goes to print, but if by some chance it doesn't, it won't be far away. The movie will act as a real big 'commercial' for this game with game players, so operators better get ready for the location and player demands that are surely coming.

The name of the game? Don't really know, but we believe it will be something a bit more original than *Street Fighter 3*

INDONESIA

LEISURE INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

Indonesia's PT Piranti Bisnis in association with AIC Conferences are organising a Leisure Industry Conference in Indonesia for 25th & 26th April.

The venue is the Shangri-La Hotel in Jakarta and the organisers have assembled a fine assortment of speakers and forum heads that should give a thorough insight into all aspects of the amusement and leisure industries in Indonesia.

Those interested can contact PT Piranti Bisnis by phone on +6221 521 3416 and fax, +6221 521 3423

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INSERT BILLS
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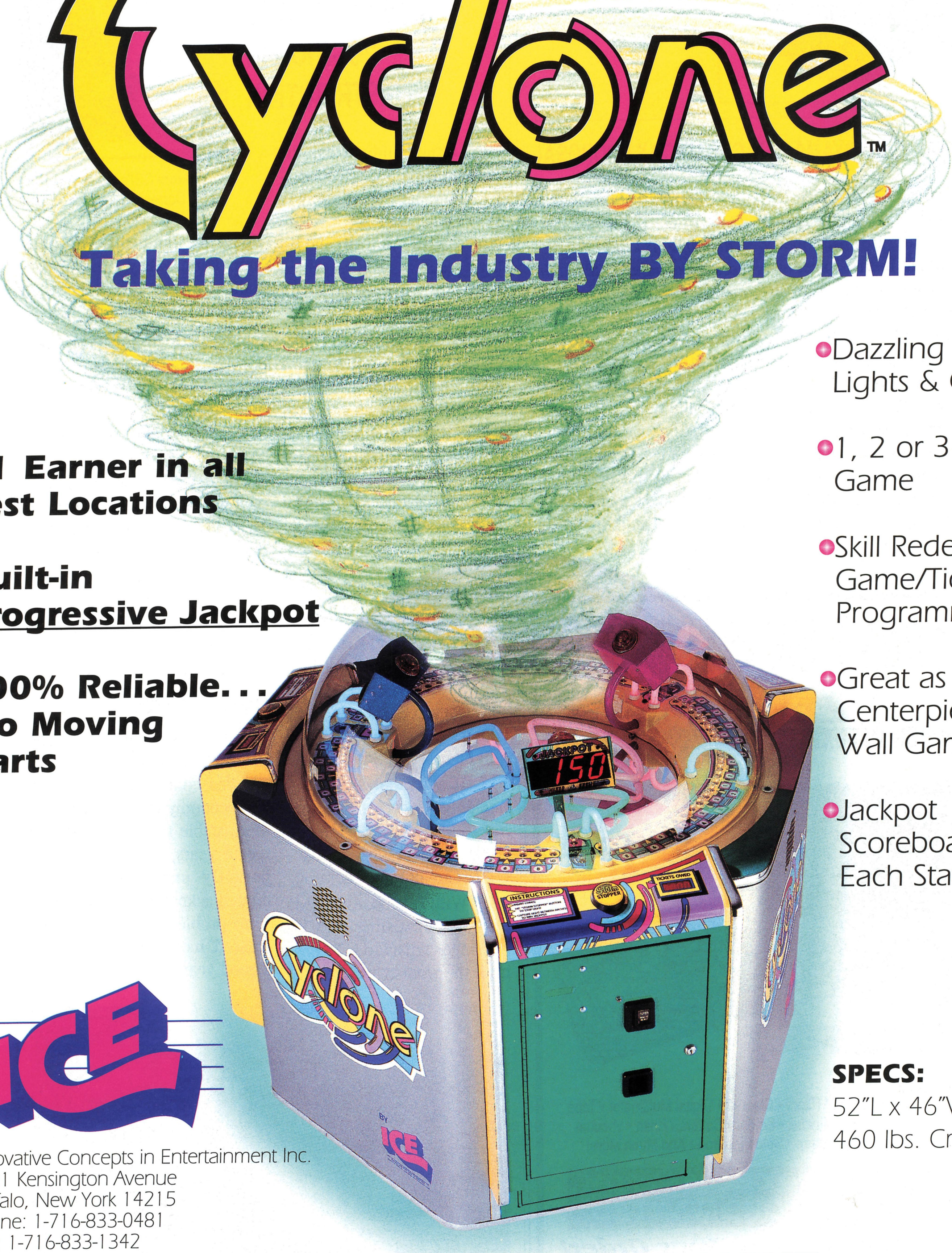
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STOPPER
TICKETS OWED
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BY ICE

- **#1 Earner in all Test Locations**
- **Built-in Progressive Jackpot**
- **100% Reliable... No Moving Parts**

- Dazzling Neon Lights & Graphics
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WIN THE JACKPOT!

◆

NAKAYAMA ATTACKS UK TAX PROPOSAL

Sega Corp Chief Executive Hayao Nakayama who features prominently elsewhere in this issue, was commendably quick in attacking the new British tax on amusement machines.

In a letter to Michael Heseltine, chief of the UK Board of Trade, he expressed his concern about the impact on the new tax and how seriously Sega are viewing it in respect to their whole UK and European programme of development.

Stating that *"the importance of the UK as the central market is key to the success of the industry throughout Europe and any action that affects the UK has wide implications to Sega's current and future plans"* Nakayama made it clear that unless the new tax was repealed, Sega would have to reconsider it's existing business plan of manufacturing in the UK and expanding it's distribution and operating divisions.

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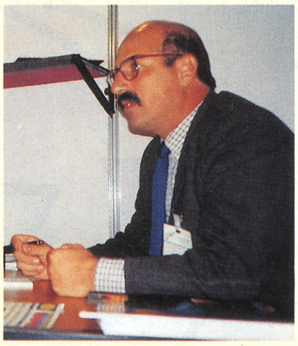
SOUTH AMERICA

JAMES INDUSTRIES TAKE UP STRONG POSITION IN DISTRIBUTION



From CBI's South American Correspondent Joao Ghani

James Industries, the well known American distributors are establishing a very strong presence in South America by way of putting their resources and respected name into joint ventures with local companies.

The company which decided to go into South America after SALEX '93, has access to top line coin-op products from all over the world. It first set up a distributorship in Argentina in a joint venture with local company, Glastrom & Arigato who are based in Buenos Aires and Cordoba, and are now establishing a similar outlet in Brazil.

In Brazil, James Industries will join with Art Som, a strong local company presided over by Daniel Bolon, one of the most respected men in the country's coin-op industry and will be based in Sao Paulo.

It will handle many brands of video games and redemption games, parts and components, Pinballs, Jukeboxes and all things coin-op.

With Jukeboxes (NSM) they are negotiating with local singer artists to help promote the product and are confident that with this and other innovations, they can substantially increase the numbers of CD Jukeboxes in the market

TAITO USA PLANNING MOVE INTO BRAZIL

Taito USA are reported to be planning a move into Brazil in the very near future. Word has it that they have already tied up a deal with local partners and will be looking at both distribution of their products, and operations.

Several US arms of Japanese companies are already operating in Brazil in a big way, with Capcom (through Romstar) and SNK the most prominent

OUTLOOK 1995?

Generally the outlook held for 1995 is one of optimism guarded confidence. The country's economy appears to be much more stable than it has been in recent years, with inflation apparently under control, and though acknowledging there are some problems that must be addressed, most expect 1995 to be a good year for coin-op.

From left: Keith White, Training Manager for NSM America, Dave Drouillard, Sales Manager NSM, Aldo Andreu, President James Industries and Daniel Bolon President Art Som, pictured in Sao Paulo.

"GET SMART"
IN REDEMPTION

KILLER T-REX

KILLER T-REX

SMART
TOSS
EM

TOSS EM

BIG BERTHA

BUDDY BEAR

SHOOT TO WIN JR.
CHUCKLES THE CLOWN

CHUCKLES THE CLOWN
SHOOT to WIN!

2 HOOP

CHUCKLES THE CLOWN

1 HOOP

SHOOT TO WIN BASKETBALL

SHOOT to WIN!

1 HOOP

SPECIAL EDITION
SHOOT to WIN!

2 HOOP

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10 OR 13
FOOT LENGTHS

1 TO 4 PLAYER

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IN MANDARIN
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CANDY CRANE

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CANDY CRANE
PLAY TILL YOU WIN

CANDY CRANE

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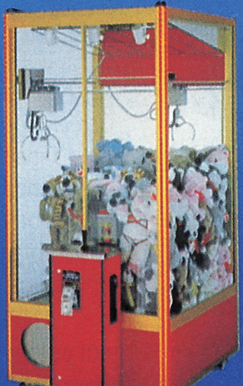
TRIPLE

WATCH CRANE
SINGLE OR
DOUBLE



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◆

IGS "CHALLENGE" DOING WELL

Alien Challenge from Taiwan's IGS is a game that's generating some good reports as it continues to gain exposure around the world. Priced quite reasonably, the game is finding favour with street operators

◆

BALLY 'S SHADOW

Bally have released The Shadow prior to ATEI and are hopeful it will reverse the trend that their recent Pinball games have followed.

The Shadow Pinball is themed on the comic strip character who apparently has a large following and whom we believe will soon feature in a Hollywood .movie.

◆

ARCADE SPACE REGULATIONS BITE

The restrictive regulations on machine space in Hong Kong's arcades are really starting to bite now as revenues drop more than 20% in many one time profitable locations.

Coupled with possibly the highest rents in the world, the regulations are making many arcades inviable to continue operating and a considerable amount of closures are considered likely this year.

◆

GAMESTAR ALIVE

Though little has been heard from Gamestar lately, the Capcom and Romstar company, formed to build Pinballs, Our reports indicate they are very close to making quite a lot of noise in the market place.

UNITED KINGDOM

SURVEY ON MACHINES IN SINGLE SITES SHOWED LOSS SITUATION BEFORE NEW TAX

An industry survey taken by BACTA before the introduction of a new license Duty in last November's Budget showed that of the five major coin operated items employed in single sites in the UK, only AWP's were showing an adequate return on investment.

The survey was the most detailed ever undertaken by BACTA, covering 61 companies with an estimated 90% of the UK machine supply business and the results were extremely disturbing.

In brief, the survey showed;

AWP's:

Though AWP's were shown to be making an adequate return on capital invested, they were not earning sufficient to subsidise other products as may have been the case in the past.

Jukeboxes:

Declining income over the past few years has this item now costing the industry £2.8 million, representing a loss of £2 per week per machine before interest is taken into account.

Pool Tables:

Pool provided an enormous shock in that after all costs were identified, particularly those related to spares and promotion, the industry was losing £5.7 mil. on Pool per year.

Video Games:

Covering a broad range of products from old, fully depreciated games to new simulators, video was shown to be just breaking even

Pinball:

Another loss maker when high operating costs and depreciation on such a fast moving product are taken into account.

Overall a very gloomy picture emerged as it was estimated that with the total value of machines in use being £163 million and those machines producing turnover of £228 million, the industry was in fact only making £2.2 million profit, (before interest, which would surely turn that figure into a loss)

That this survey was taken (and published) before the £250 tax on amusement machines and the increase in AWP duty which is estimated to take a further £70 million out of the industry.

LUCKY LAS VEGAS
CASINO
LUCKY LAS VEGAS
CASINO

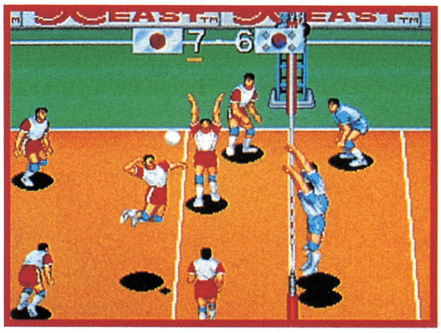
Of all types of coin equipment, only AWP's showed an adequate return on investment

JAPAN

NEW VOLLEYBALL GAME FROM DATA EAST

Following the success of their recent sports games *Street Hoop* and *Dream Soccer*, Japan's Data East have developed a great looking Volleyball game that they are expecting to be very good for operators.

Though Volleyball does not enjoy as high a profile as Basketball or Soccer and has been tried a few times before with limited success, DE engineers have developed *World Cup Volleyball* in a similar manner to recent hit Basketball games, combining fast action, fantastic moves and ball control with genuine competition and fun, making it a game that will be attractive to *video game players in general*, not just those who have a liking for Volleyball



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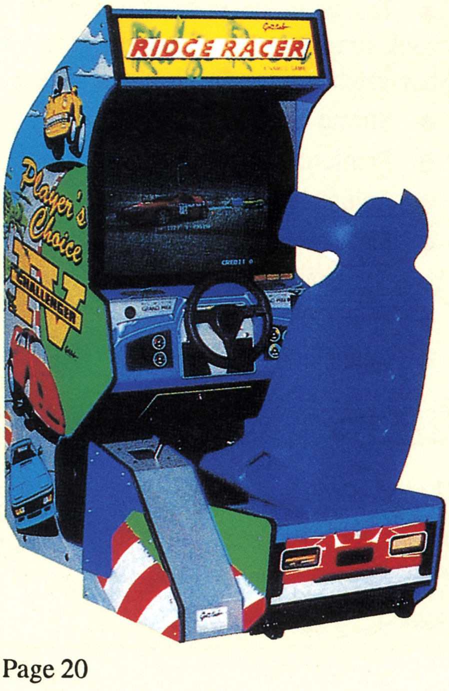

MAJOR TITLE 2

Challenger
PLAYERS CHOICE

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CANADA

SLOW DOWN IN VIDEO NOT SLOWING PENTRANIC INC.

Happy New Year from Pentranic says company VP and General Manager, Mark Trojanowski

Though a general slow down in video games and the manufacture of universal video cabinets would be expected to have effects on TV monitor manufacturers, that is certainly not the case with Pentranic Inc, whose only problem is keeping production at high enough levels to meet the orders that keep pouring in. The company is looking at opening new manufacturing facilities in foreign countries to cope with the demand for their products

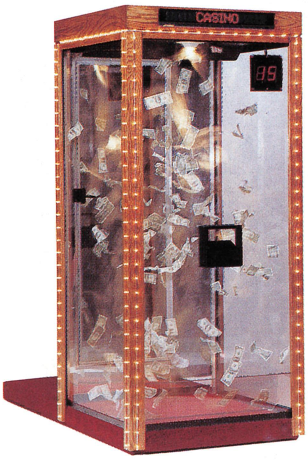
◆ *An international arcade operator who has been trying to crack Singapore for some time is rumoured to be heading into the dangerous ground of a Singapore Court*

UNITED STATES

NEW MODEL CASH CUBE

The ever popular Cash Cube in which players get inside and attempt to catch the paper money that is blown around within, is proving a good earner and promotional tool in FEC's and to cater to this end of the market, Fun Industries have produced a new De Luxe model cube that they will market as the *Hollywood*

The *Hollywood* version features solid oak corner posts and top with built in casino lights and scrolling message board, it's fully carpeted and has a halogen light that shines on the player. Fun Industries Inc can be contacted on +1 309 755 5021 or fax +1 309 755 1684



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- FUN FOR ALL AGES
- GREAT SOUND EFFECTS
- FULLY METERED

PENALTY SHOOT OUT

PENALTY SHOOT OUT

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Challenger
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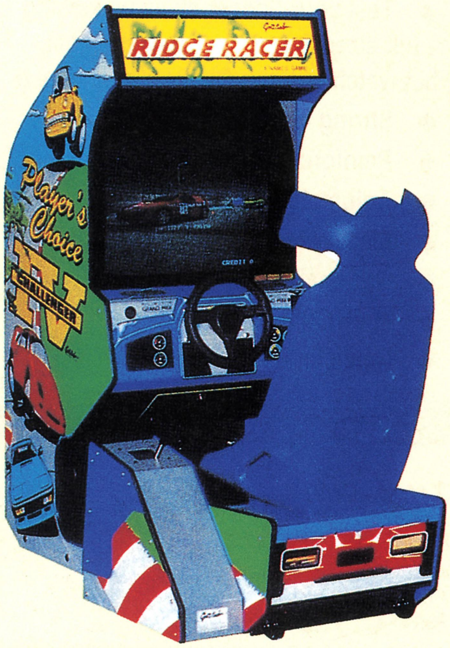

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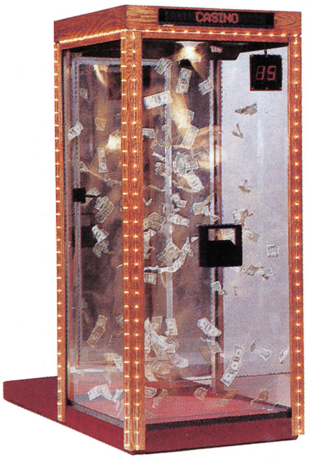

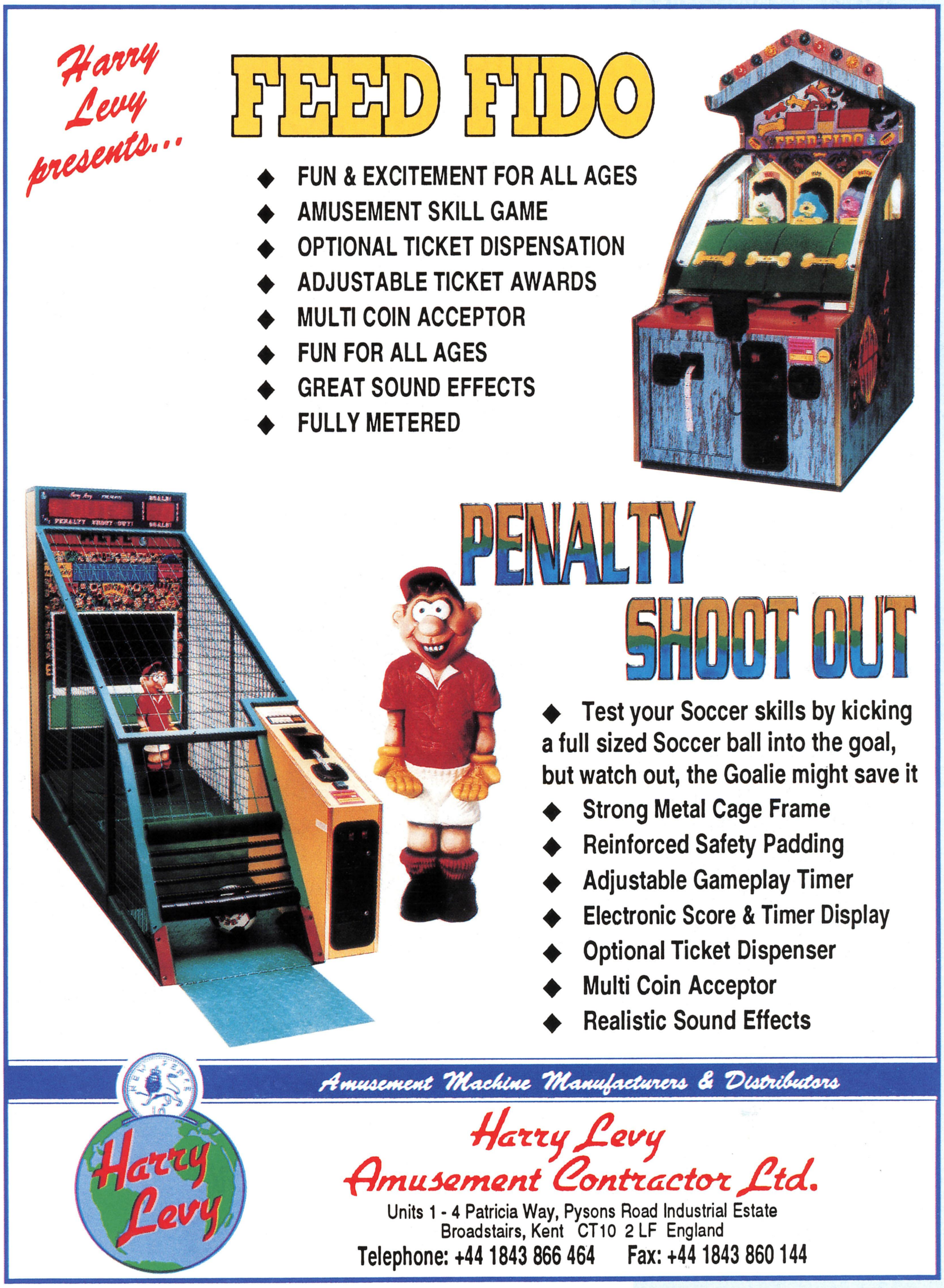

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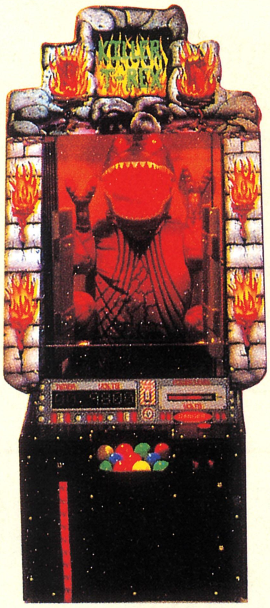

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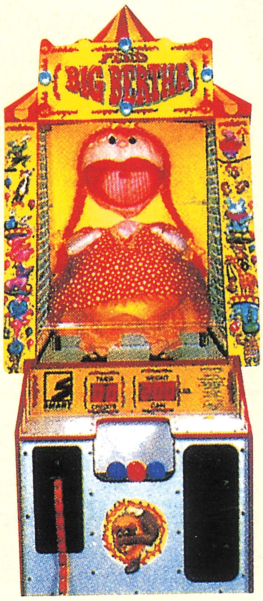

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NEW IMPORTED ITALIAN SOCCER TABLES.......$POA

NEW NEO GEO CARTRIDGES...$POA

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◆ *Suzo International have appointed Beirut based Games World Corp as it's distributor in the Middle East with the deal covering, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and the UAE*

USA

STARGATE TOP AT BOX OFFICE

Premier Technology's upcoming Gottlieb Pinball, *Stargate*, looks like being a top licensing deal following the opening of the movie over the Xmas period in the USA.

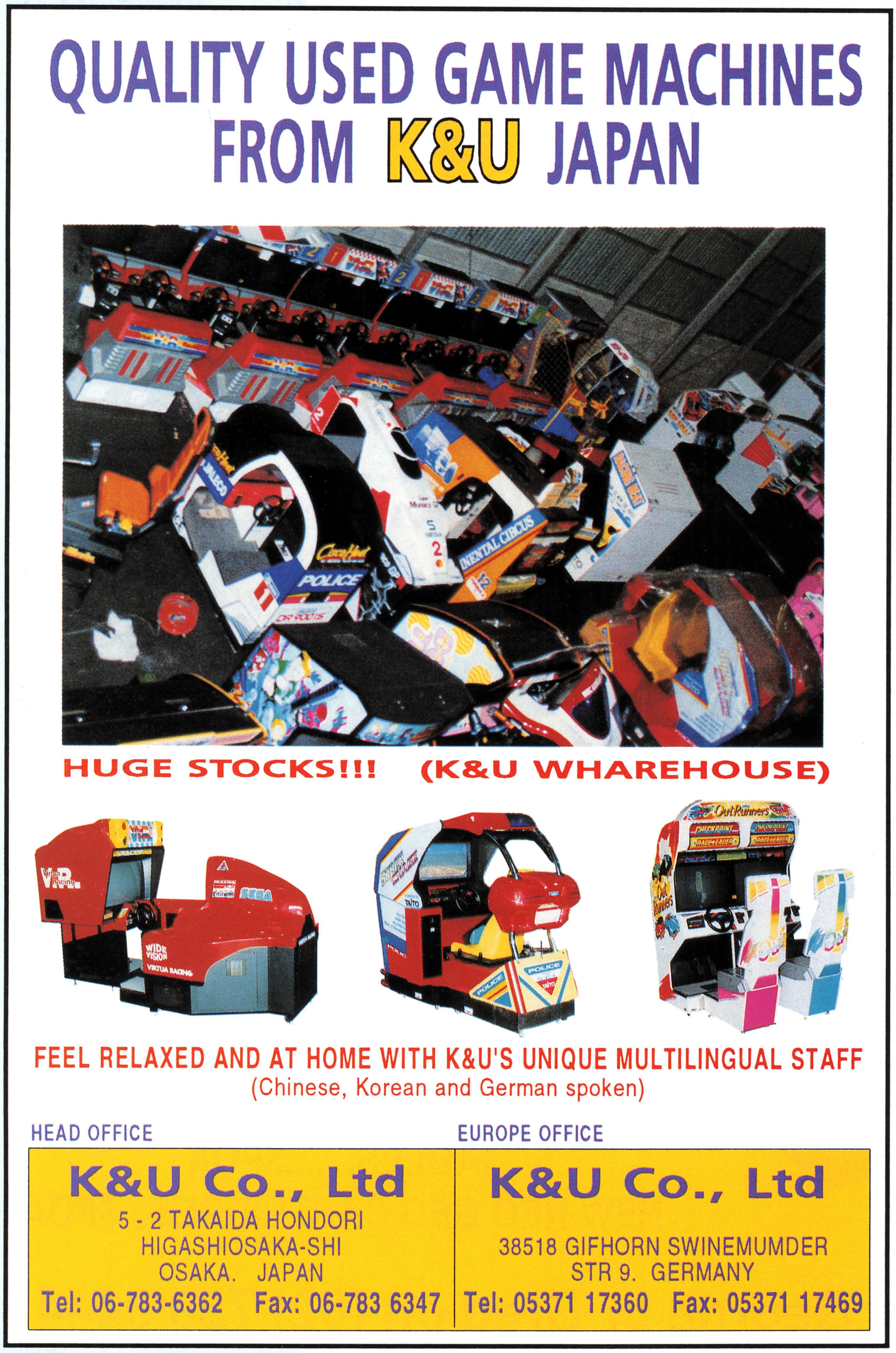
Stargate the movie, was #1 at the box office earning over $60 million in eight weeks and clearly outpointed many bigger productions. The movie returned it's makers the $50 million it cost in only six weeks.

UNITED STATES

ICY CYCLONE, BEATS UP A STORM

Cyclone by ICE Inc, the extraordinary redemption game released in the USA last month has taken it's fantastic test performances into the open players market as the word spreads amongst operators and sales build up.

Seen as a game that can work anywhere, *Cyclone* should soon start moving into the international market..........*if ICE Inc can get on top of the local demand.* See Games Section



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UNITED KINGDOM

NEW OPERATOR ASSOCIATION

Norman Leftly

A new association for licensed operators of single sites has been formed in the UK by Mike McFadden (VPA) and Norman Leftly (formerly Jaleco)

The organisers claim that though BACTA has done an excellent job in many areas of the industry, the 973 small operators of single sites are a minority and as such, have been neglected.

It was claimed that the response from operators to the new association had been excellent and he would be convening a meeting of the association in early February

Norman Leftly emphasised that the new association, ALGEI, was not in competition with BACTA

SINGAPORE

IMPRESSIVE PROGRAMME FOR BIG FUN CENTRE CONFERENCE

The programme for next months big Asia Pacific Family Entertainment Centre Conference in Singapore is now finalised and copies can be obtained and/or registrations made by contacting Anthea Ong at AIC Conferences in Singapore on +65 222 8550 (phone) or +65 226 3264 (fax.)

Dates are 15 -17th March and the venue is the Pan Pacific Hotel where accommodation can also be arranged.

AIC have assembled a most impressive line up of speakers and forum panels and the conference is a one stop way to find out all you could possibly want to know about any aspect of Family Fun Centres in South East Asia and Asia, the worlds biggest and fastest moving, developing region.

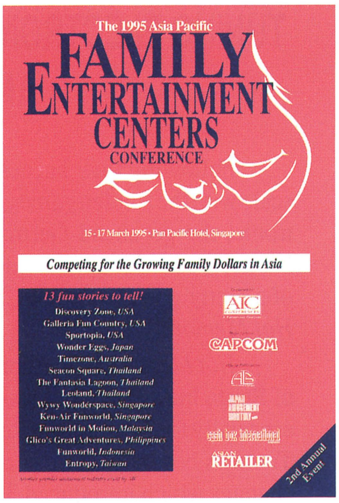
For any doubters of this areas potential, we quote John Naisbitt and Pat Aburdene of the influential and widely respected reference publication, *Megatrends 2000* who say;

"The Asia Pacific Rim region is twice as large as Europe and the USA combined. Today, Asia has half the world's population and by the year 2000, it will have two thirds while Europe will have only 6%.

Asia is a three trillion dollar market growing at the rate of three billion dollars a week"

Thats GROWTH!

Copies of the programme for this important and informative conference are also available through Cash Box.



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JAPAN

DATA EAST LAUNCH NEW GAME FOR TITAN

Data East who have had considerable recent success with their Neo Geo games like the current *Street Hoop* Basketball game, have launched a new fighting game titled, Outlaws of the Lost Dynasty for use on the Sega "Titan" system which was first seen at the last AM Show

The Titan system is a spin off from Sega's new home games system, the Saturn which is expected to go into international markets this year and carries the company's hopes in the hot consumer market

◆

LINKING USA ?

A lot of operators are asking the "Where is" question about the long awaited linking for Cruis'n USA and it seems there is little in the way of an answer coming from Midway

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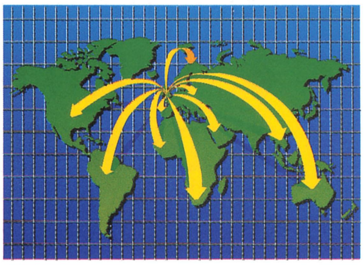

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◆ GULF SHOW SHAPING UP

The Gulf Leisure Parks & Fun Centre Show to be held in Dubai March 6th to 9th is fast shaping up as an event of importance right through the Middle East.

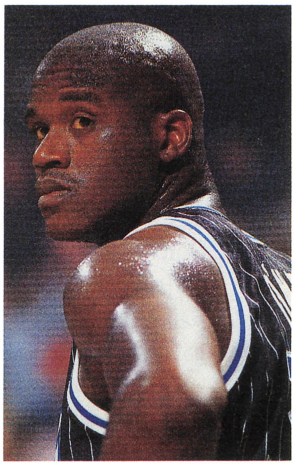
Most major manufacturers will be exhibiting and already it seems that attendance will be way up on early forecasts

GERMANY

TUNING ELECTRONIC "SLAM DUNK" 1995 WITH TWO TOP PINS AND WORLD DISTRIBUTION OF HOT MEMORY

Following their success on a global scale with the Raiden games, Tuning Electronic, the go ahead German distributor has secured total, world wide distribution of a pretty good looking PCB game titled *Hot Memory*.

Hot Memory is an improved version of Strata Inc's *Pairs* that was put together especially for Tuning after Reymond Safft, Tuning's boss suggested some significant changes which introduced 33 new 'ladies' and made the game noticeably quicker. *Hot Memory* is now shipping and proving a very popular game in pubs and taverns.



Tuning are also currently moving Premier Technology's very good Pinball, *Shaq Attaq* into the German market, following an extremely good test period that showed the game was capable of returning quite remarkable figures.

Since it's release *Shaq Attaq* has even improved on it's very impressive test figures, clearly outpointing the top and current Williams, Bally and Sega Pinballs by as much as 35% in locations where it competed on a 'head to head' basis.

Showing a versatility that means dollars for operators, Shaq has proven equally as effective in cash collection with players of all ages, in all types of location.

And with Freddy Krueger still doing excellent business, Tuning now have the top two pinball games in Germany in their stable to kick start 1995.

UNITED STATES

TWI (ATARI) BOW OUT OF CONSUMER SHOWS

Following on from our story last month on exhibitors loss of enthusiasm for the growing number of Trade Shows being held around the world, Time Warner Interactive have announced they will cease participation in Consumer electronic trade shows and seriously consider dropping out of coin-op shows also.

TWI intend to show their products in hotel suites in the immediate vicinity of the shows they don't exhibit at, which will no doubt incur the wrath of show organisers who look on this type of activity in a similar manner to the way an operator looks at site stealers.

TWI's approach to the problem can hardly be the right one when looking at both sides of the equation, but it does emphasise the growing concern in the industry of the huge costs involved in exhibiting at countless shows.

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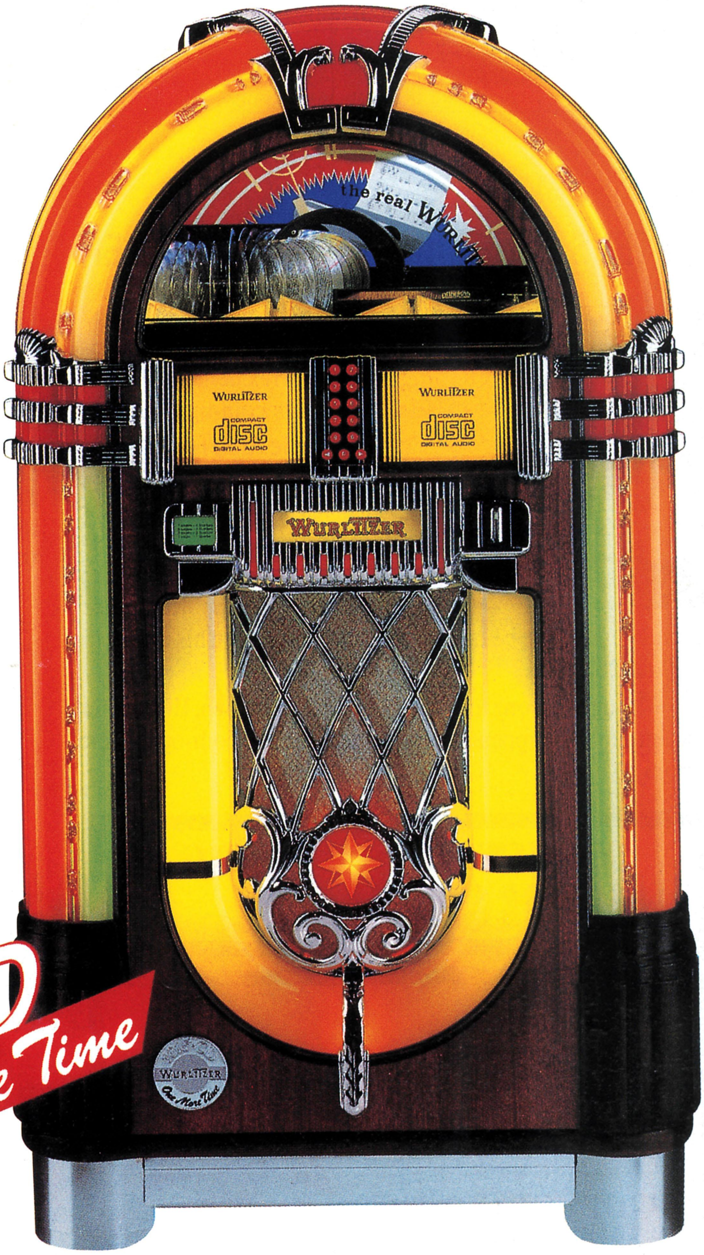

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UNITED STATES

STEVE KAUFMANN REJOINS PREMIER

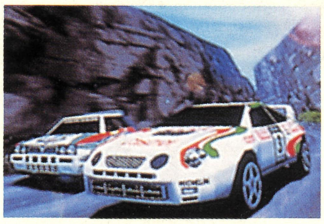
Steve Kaufmann has rejoined Premier Technology after resigning his Vice President position at Electronic Arts coin-op division.

Electronic Arts, 'head hunted' Kaufmann whilst he held the key, VP of Sales position at Premier and though Premier chief Gil Pollock did not stand in the way of what seemed a big opportunity for Kaufmann, he will be no doubt be delighted with his return to the Pinball market.

Though reasons for the switch are not known, Electronic Arts Inc have not appeared really committed to coin-op in their actions to date.

JAPAN

SEGA TROT OUT BIG RALLY GAME



Sega Enterprises have now completed their new driving game, *Sega Rally Championship (SRC)* and reports indicate it's a beauty.

The game uses the names of top rally drivers and the World Rally Championship (WRC) under license and is built in the Daytona mould using the very latest in computer graphics technology which are up another notch again from those used in *Daytona USA*.

SRC also licences the use of authentic rally cars, the Celica GT-4 from Toyota and Lancia Delta HF Integrale from Fiat, both presented in full rally dress.

The De Luxe version that we expect will be showing at ATEI as this issue goes to print, features a 50" screen and simulated drivers cockpit, and it appears likely that like *Daytona*, the twin version will be released in about three months.

Fast, exciting and very realistic, *Sega Rally Championship* is considered a lethal package that will grab players like few before it, but which could also pose a distinct health threat to many Daytona USA's around the world.

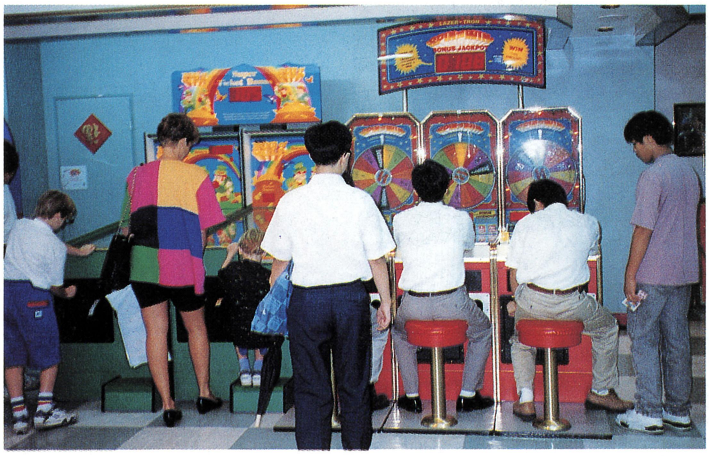
HONG KONG

NAMCO BUY 45% OF WHIMSYLAND

Japan's Namco Ltd late last year purchased 45% of the Yaohan Whimsy Co Ltd, operators of Hong Kong's Whimsy Land chain of amusement arcades.

The Whimsy Land chain was set up by the Yaohan supermarket and mall group who have valuable connections with mainland China that would have to be very attractive to Namco who have reportedly had considerable difficulty in their Chinese operations to date.

The deal opens up good opportunities for both parties, Yaohan will reap obvious benefits in being partners to one of the world's great gamemak-ers and amusement centre developers, and Namco will gain easier access to China where Yaohan already have large projects underway which include the establishment of amusement arcades.



Though Namco are well established in redemption it's highly unlikely that future Whimsey Land/Namco locations will be 100% redemption like this one in Hong Kong's City Plaza mall at Tai Koo

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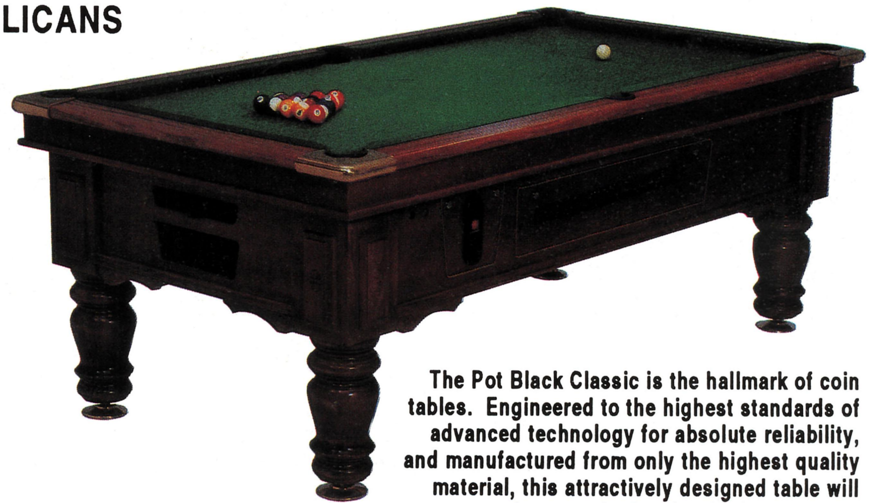

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Victims of the ¥en

HIGH VALUE OF YEN NOT HELPING JAPAN........ OR US

Despite a recession that won't go away, increasing turmoii in the workplace, the changing values of the younger brigade, decreasing exports, and banks being owed billions of dollars that they will never collect, the Japanese yen keeps getting stronger against other currencies.

The yen is so strong in fact that it's now working against Japan's economic recovery, car exports and those of electronic consumer goods are way down on previous figures, being almost priced out of the world's markets, simply on currency exchange rates.

No one here lays claim to being an economic or financial *Guru* with vast knowledge of high finance, but there must be some reason to suspect that the yen is being manipulated by the world's financial powers to ensure economic recovery in other countries at Japan's expense.

At least that theory makes a bit of sense, holding the yen at high levels makes Japanese products unaffordable while the other manufacturing countries get their respective acts together and pinch the Japanese markets through their devalued currencies and cheaper products

And that may well be OK in the overall scheme of things, but it doesn't do much for industry's such as ours that *have* to buy out of Japan.

The ever rising yen is taking the Japanese produced amusement games to levels that are causing great concern in the industry, and as Japan is now looking at what could be described as an industrial revolution, with workers wanting more for providing less, there's little doubt that prices are going to get much higher, before the yen is brought back to a reasonable level that will in effect bring prices down.

When the 50" Daytona was priced at ¥1.6 million on it's release in Japan, early this year, operators enthusiasm for the brilliant game dropped quite a few notches, though most accepted the price as in keeping with the current price trend

It was not however, a time for dancing in the streets.

The ¥1.6 million yen converted to approximately US$16,000.00, £10,500.00, or $AUD22,000.00, and of course that was factory price, FOB Japan, plus import costs.

In 1980 when video games were at a peak, that ¥1.6 million would have converted to US$7360, £3500 or AUD$6400, as in 1980 a US dollar could buy ¥215 where today it's less than ¥100. A British Pound could buy ¥500, but today it will only get ¥155 odd and an Australian dollar which could buy ¥250 then, can only buy ¥75 today.

As victims of the Yen, it's little wonder we're finding prices in some cases, beyond our means.

Virtua Fighter 2
SEGA

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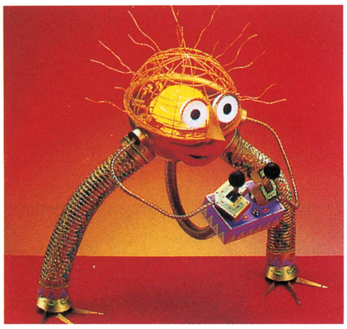

CRYSTAL BALL CORNER

Question: Capcom are considered the best and most consistent conversion game (PCB) maker in the world and many thousands of operators are waiting for the big Japanese company to produce another top game that can emulate the performance of Street Fighter II.

Can they do it in the foreseeable future?

Virtua Crystal Ball 33:

In a word, yes, and it may be sooner than you think. Capcom endured a tough year in 1994 due mainly to poor performance in the home game sector, but the coin-op division didn't do all that well either and the company chiefs were 'stung'.

There's a lot of pride in the Japanese game making business and none come to mind that you could put into the "good loser" category.

I'd bet a 'squillion' that Capcom are still smarting, but at the same time they're bringing forward a few tricks that they've been saving up for just such a situation and they'll pop most of them into a big flagship game like Street Fighter 3.

Street Fighter 3, whether it's called that or not, could well be the game, it's going to look great and use familiar heads in digitised versions of Claude Van Damm and Kylie Minogue.

Though many, including our erstwhile editor, seem to think fighting games are history, they're wrong, the right fighting game will bring back the street players, and the new *Street Fighter* game, that you will find is different in many ways to previous games in the series, may be the one.

Whether it's the new *Street Fighter* game or another, Capcom will be back on top of the conversion game market long before 1995 is done.

They will produce several fighting games, and most will be quite different to what they've done to date. Capcom are also due to produce a good shooting game, possibly along the lines of *1942*, but once again with some very innovative twists.

It's also highly probable that the company will choose 1995 to enter the dedicated game market with a very good and innovative driving game.

And over in the USA you can expect to see the long awaited Pinball game come out of their big new Chicago facility, it too is long odds on to feature Claude and Kylie on the backglass and will make a lot of ACME goers in March, sit up and take notice.

It's going to be a big year for Capcom in many areas, have no doubt of that.

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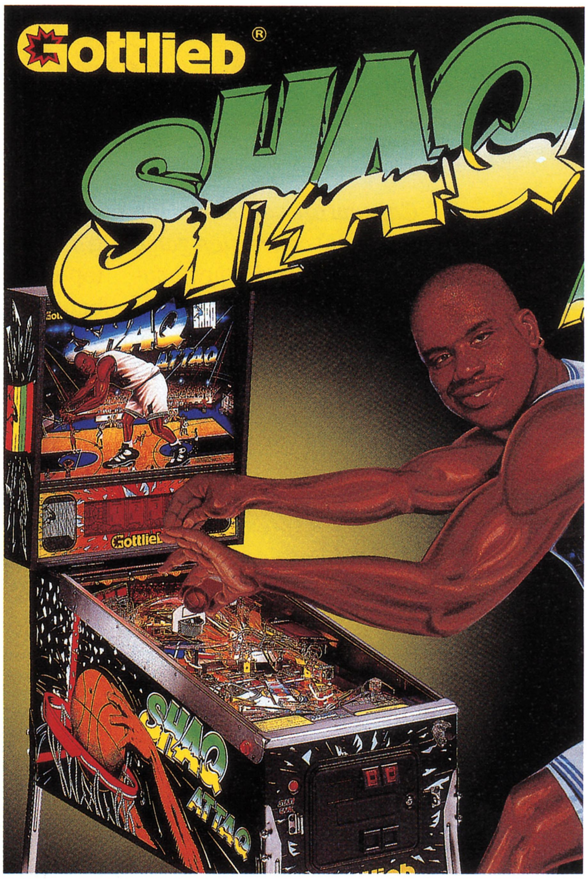
STREET & PUB GAME

Attack with SHAQ



If you've come out of the Christmas/New Year period a little jaded and feel you're not quite up to getting back into the tiresome business of hustling up dollars......give yourself a bonus, sit back and let the big guy hustle up the dollars for you..............Get hold of a *Shaq Attaq* or six, whack them out on the street or in a few pubs, and make money the easy way.

In *Shaq Attaq* you have one of the hottest pins put into the market for some time and it's contained in the most reliable Pinball package built today, Premier Technology/Gottlieb.

Basketball is far and away the best promoted sport in the world, everywhere you go, kids walk, talk and dress Basketball, it's gone from a localised game to an international phenomenon in a few short years and every owner of *Shaq Attaq* will benefit greatly from having the Basketball promotional team working for him

On top of that, big Shaq O'Neil is second only to Michael Jordan in drawing power, so *Shaq Attaq* is a very attractive game and theme for operators to work with, but it's also much more than that, it's a very, very good game.

We have already seen players lining up to play *Shaq* in our home market arcades, giving Pinballs like *Corvette* and *The Flintstones* a real good, old fashioned whacking in the cash box, and on speaking to the players pouring money into it, they love it and want more

The game is earning top money in arcades, pubs and on the street and there is no real reason why it can't hold earnings for long periods in all those types of location, but if we had to voice a preference, on the street and in the pubs would seem the surest of bets as players absolutely love it out in Basketball country, where caps are turned round and baggy shorts reign.

It's very seldom that a Pinball has made the impression on the market that this one has and we believe it's going to be around for a long time

KIDDIE RIDE

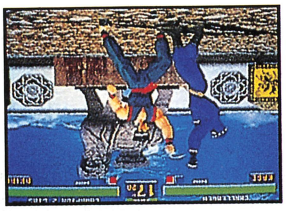
POLICE
POLICE
88

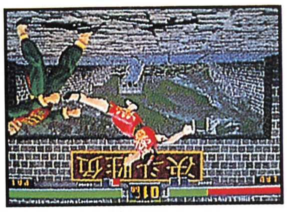
Operators have asked us why we haven't featured a Kiddie Ride in this section to date and the answer is simple, there is such a smorgasbord of great Kiddie Rides out in the market right now that it would be grossly unfair to single out any one piece.

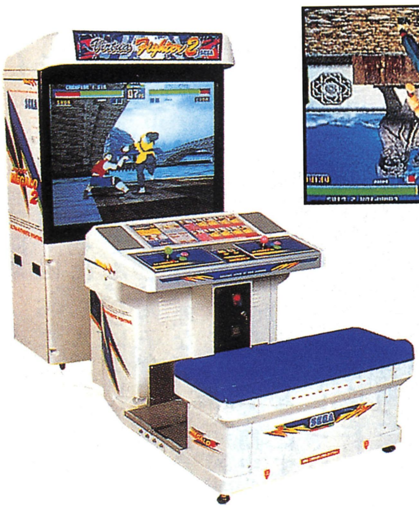
Operators in this field will not go wrong buying new rides from any of the reputable manufacturers or distributors of new KR's.

In our view, the whole Kiddie Ride market is in the "Red Seal Special" category these days and smart operators who picked up on that quickly are already reaping the dividends.

Stick to popular themes in your choice of rides, don't buy the "cheapies" unless they measure up to the quality pieces in every way and pay a flat fee for location space or work the commission well your way, and you cannot go wrong.







If *Virtua Fighter II* isn't the best fighting game on the market today, it's got to be horribly close. *VFII* provides a standard of video game fighting that is so visually exciting, there is no way any self respecting player of this type of game would think of walking past it without dropping coin.

And when encased in the big 40" De Luxe cabinet it comes into the "Special" category for arcades or any of the larger locations.

What's so hot about it?

Well, the original *Virtua Fighter* was good, but it was the first of the genre, the first fighting game done in polygons, and being that, the game designers were always going to do better as they became more familiar with the technology

VFII shows how far the Sega engineers have come since the first game and how they have learned more of what can be done with the technology. *VFII* has absolutely incredible graphics, more moves, more characters and it's quicker, with that tiny lapse in control reaction which was evident in the original game, completely eliminated.

We used to worry about sequel games, but it looks to us that with these new technologies that can be developed so quickly, the 2nd and 3rd games in series of this type are now almost an odds on bet to be better than their predecessor.

Distribution has been slow with this game considering Sega first showed it at JAMMA in September last year, but it is starting to get into the market now in good numbers and though the De Luxe version is quite expensive , the smaller models are quite reasonably priced in places like the USA. For the big sites that can spend the big money however, we see the De Luxe model as a real "killer piece"

Of fighting games on the market as we write, only Namco's *Tekken* stands a chance of competing head to head with this one, *Virtua Fighter II* is an exceptional game that should earn exceptionally good money.

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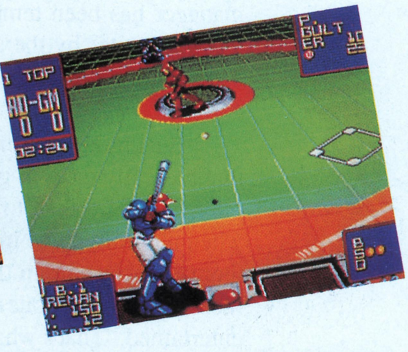

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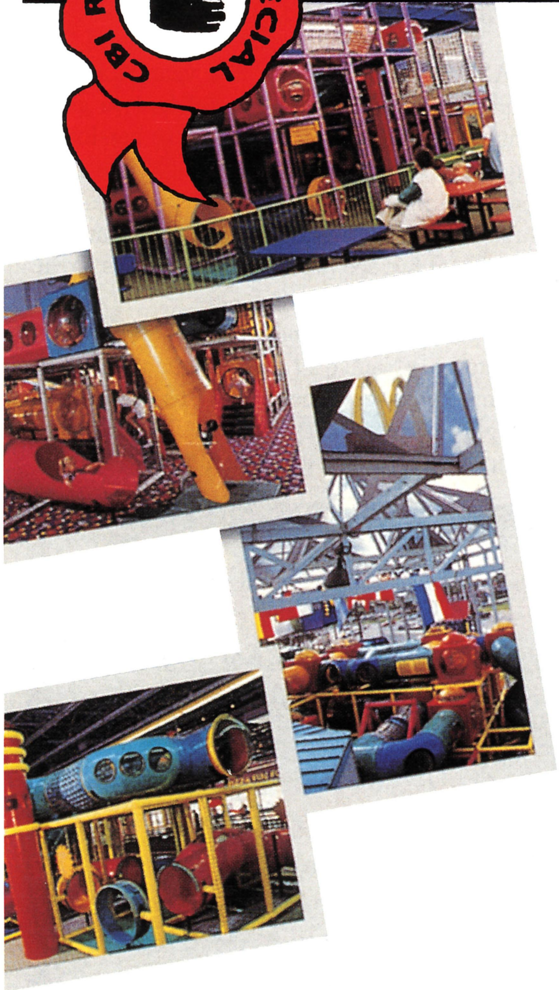
CBI RED SEAL SPECIAL

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE



Soft Play Can Make Your Day

One of the most annoying things that an amusement centre operator can encounter in normal operations is when young families come in to the centre, all set to get stuck into the games, and the little ones around 3 or 4 year old that are tagging along, bug mum, dad, older brothers and sisters so much that the whole tribe packs up and goes long before they've had a chance to spend a fraction of what they were prepared to spend.

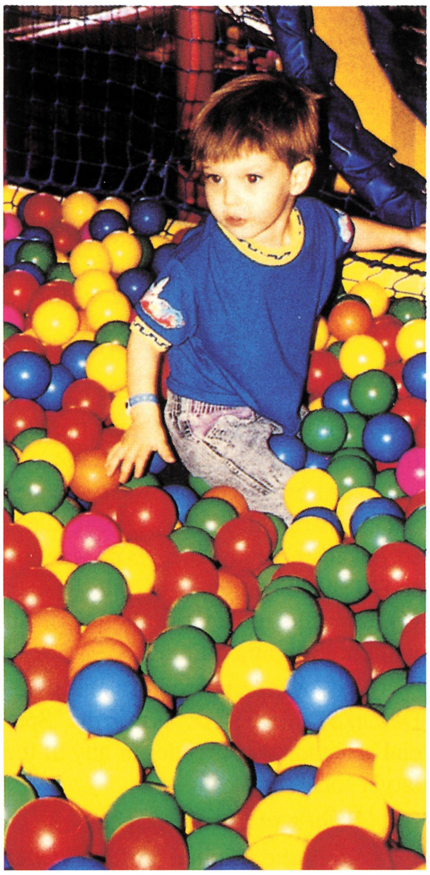
Not good, and many an arcade manager has been tempted to grab the ankle biter by the scruff of the neck and..................lets say, *educate him.*

But unlike amusement arcades that basically cater to game players only, an FEC has to ensure that when a family come in their doors, there is something in the establishment to keep every one of them fully entertained. That's what sets FEC's apart from arcades.

Unfortunately, being aware of all this doesn't alter the fact that the little guys are still the problem and that's where soft play units are so good at putting the "F" for "Family" into FEC's.

There is some magnificent soft play systems available in the market today and one of the best comes from the American company Soft Play Inc who have ticked up over 3000 installations around the world in the last ten years.

Soft Play can fit out areas of any shape or size, their products are safe, colourful, attractive and basically maintenance free, but most importantly a soft play system will keep little horrors occupied and fully entertained for hours if the parents choose to leave them in there that long.



It's a top trick, in the bigger systems, parents or minders can throw the monsters in one end and forget about them for extended periods while the little guys have the time of their lives doing all the things that they would be trying to do at home in the lounge room.

They can climb, jump, yell, crawl around, yodel, wallow in pits of plastic balls, the lot, they can do just about whatever their hearts desire, without breaking anything or hurting themselves, and when they come out the other end, it's just a case of toddling them up to the entry and chucking them in again if more time is needed on the games.

Great stuff

Price wise, the cost of a Soft Play installation is not cheap, but it's certainly not prohibitive either and though real income figures may show that a soft play area has a poor return per square metre compared to say, the redemption or games areas, it's a case where figures do not tell the whole story as the real income is made from older members of the family that are not getting bugged by the little ones.

It's just about got to the stage where any real FEC has to have one, try Soft Play Inc for yours on +1 704 377 8600 or fax +1 704 377 9558

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FEED FIDO

FEED FIDO
FIFI
FIDO
PATCH

Any redemption game that involves "whacking" normally makes it's mark with players and *Feed Fido* is in the process of making it's mark right now.

A simple, fun game marketed by the UK's Harry Levy Amusements who are also the creators, and US manufacturers and distributors, Coastal Amusements Inc, *Feed Fido's* prime asset is that it is equally appealing to all ages and both sexes.

Little guys are seen climbing up on stools to have a whack, older kids whack hell out of it and even the mums and dads have a go.

Though requiring pretty good reflexes and a bit of skill to win big on the game, anyone can have fun with *Feed Fido* and this is always a big factor in a successful redemption game.

The game comes in an attractive cabinet with bright lighting system and has excellent sound effects to compliment the three little doggies, Fido, Fifi and Patch, that all work together to keep players feeding good quantities of coin into the machine, whilst they try to get the bone up the playfield.

Overall *Feed Fido* is a good solid game with an ageless theme that is capable of good consistent earnings in any redemption orientated location, it's priced reasonably and will prove pretty good property. Contact Harry Levy Amusements in the UK on +44 1843 866 464 • Fax: +44 1843 860 144 and Coastal Amusements Inc (USA) on +1 908 905 6662 • Fax: +1 908 905 6815

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SEGA TAKE OZ INDUSTRY FROM EDGE OF HUGE EXPANSION, INTO JEOPARDY

Though currently going through a difficult period similar to what most countries are going through, the coin-op industry in Australia has a quite buoyant market that is now ready for considerable expansion.

There are approximately 1600 full time operators of amusement machines that last year grossed a conservatively estimated AUD$300 million in revenue.

Operators are believed to have spent at least 40% of that, or $120 million on replacement of equipment, so though it's not a huge market in world terms, it is a quite healthy market that manufacturers are viewing with increasing respect as they search the world for sales.

The industry was held back for many years by the eagerness of both US and Japanese companies to grant virtual monopolies in the shape of "exclusive distribution" of their products to individual companies which put a situation into play where operators were severely restricted in expanding and developing their businesses.

With the industry's success in challenging exclusive rights on PCB's in the Mothers Imports case, parallel imports of PCB's was made legal in 1992 and operators were given the right to choose from whom they bought. Parallel imports of dedicated games soon flowed through and prices paid by operators were cut by an estimated $15,000 per machine on Daytona alone.

Despite a recession and slump in video game play, the industry has prospered in the period since the Mothers Imports case, owing to operators being able to buy at competitive prices and the loosening up of regulations on amusement machines in hotels which has occurred in the same period and made pub sites the most profitable street locations in the country.

This has allowed coin-op in Australia to mature and it is now poised on the doorstep of huge expansion and further development, but Sega's move on pub locations with funding that no Australian operator can match, and their legal action with LAI to deny operators the right to buy at competitive prices, will put the promised riches in the hands of a few, while decimating the industry in general.......*if they are successful*

SEGA™

Sega Enterprises of Japan are so solidly entrenched in this industry it may be seen as unwise to criticize their actions, but Cash Box believes that it's time to take a long and searching look at this company and what appears to be a desire within,

.... to eradicate the small operators of this industry.

Most of us know the story of Sega, the company established by American Dave Rosen after the war, which after changing hands a few times ended up under the control of Hayao Nakayama who has made Sega one of the best known names in the worlds of both business and entertainment.

Sega's rise to the top has been quite incredible, and few could have anything but admiration for the work put in by Nakayama in building on the foundation supplied by Rosen.

VIRTUA COP
ICE
POLICE
CREDIT 0

Virtua Cop is the catalyst in the latest legal battle in Australia backed by Sega....but they will sell far less games if they are successful, than if they lose

And though we will join in applauding Sega's growth and ability to make extraordinarily good amusement machines, it's not the company's background or game making prowess that is the subject matter of this article, it's the way they are using the power that came to them with their success.

We need to know what makes a company which last year took some US$270 million in sales of coin equipment, and a further US$365 million in operation of coin equipment, out of the coin-op industry, can possibly achieve by taking actions that if successful and then applied globally, can put thousands of small operators right out of business.

For what this company is doing in Australia in it's assault on pub locations and it's support of monopoly in distribution of their games, cannot be viewed purely as a local situation.

Everything Sega has done to date in this industry has been done with global intent, where many have preached the global nature of coin-op, Sega have practised it religiously, so it would be absurd for anyone with a reasonable amount of 'grey matter' to even consider Sega's attack on small operators in Australia as anything other than a trial of plans that are aimed at eventually encompassing the world.

Sega's actions are not just a matter for industry discussion that culminate in a shrug of the shoulders and condolences for the Australian industry, they are a world wide industry issue that need to be treated as such.

Possibly because it's all happened to date in our back yard, *Cash Box* has been alone in raising the spectre of a hungry, power crazy Sega that seem intent on crushing small operators, but it's now time for all responsible trade publications to stop "sucking up" to this hungry company and publicly question their actions and motives in a global sense.

If Sega are let go on their merry way, treading on the operators in this industry like they are some sort of unwanted insect, without being brought to account, the consequences for all involved in this great industry of ours, are of the grimmest nature.

This magazine has remarked on the arrogance of Sega in the past, and given Nakayama a bit of curry too, but one lone voice can only carry so far, others have to look at what's going on, where it can lead, and if they have any consideration for rank and file operators at all, they have no option, but to stand up and be counted.

One thing that must be said on Hayao Nakayama is that despite what criticism is made of him as chief of Sega, he has always appeared to show a genuine concern for the coin-op industry, doing a lot of good work through JAMMA, which he presides over, in working with the AAMA and other associations around the world on industry issues and was notably first into print with a strong response to the recent imposition of a new tax on amusement machines in the UK.

In fairness to him, we considered that maybe these latest actions are not of his doing, Sega is a huge company now and there had to be a chance that some ill informed subordinates in the company, trying to meet their bosses expectations, were responsible, and if that was the case Nakayama should be informed and given the opportunity to either correct it or at very worst, explain it to his real customers.

To that end we wrote him a letter which is printed on page 41 and asked for a reply by our print deadline, the 16th January. We waited till the 20th and still had not received any semblance of a reply, meaning to us that unless Sega are a dreadfully incompetent company and don't give the boss his mail, we have to assume that Nakayama knows about the whole deal and couldn't give a fig for the operators of Australia.

OK, this guys not God, he's the boss of a public company, so we are now organising letters to be printed in the Japanese financial press, asking Sega shareholders, if, in keeping with the company's falling share price on the Stock Exchange, they are aware of Sega management giving exclusive distribution agreements that can cost the company a billion yen a year in sales.

Maybe we'll get an answer to that.

SEGA AND "EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS"

Exclusive rights as they are given to distributors by Sega take away the operators right to choose who they can buy what are generally the most sought after products from, They create monopolies* on select, "must have" games and take all the normal market forces that keep prices at a workable level, out of play.

Exclusive distributors have used the argument that the practice is necessary to protect the manufacturer from counterfeit games and are not monopolistic as operators have the choice of buying other equipment not covered by their exclusive distribution arrangement, neither of these arguments hold water in this case, Segas games are not in any counterfeit danger and the "alternative equipment" argument is saying that an operator can compete against, say Daytona USA Twin with a Drift Out or in effect, a cannon with a pop gun, and it does not hold a shred of credibility in the 'hit' driven industry we work in.

And if it were considered in the case of Daytona Twin, that there were alternatives in the shape of Ridge Racer 2 and Ace Driver, what real alternative is there when those games are also held under exclusive rights by the same distributor that has Daytona Twin.

SEGA
DAYTONA USA
RACE LEADER
1
2

The exclusivity of distribution has in the past saddled Australian operators with prices that can only be described as restrictive, in 1986 Australia had to pay $25,000 for an Out Run DX when factory price was reported to be under $10,000, Operation Wolf was sold for around $14,000 in Australia, but under $3000 in the USA, and more recently Virtua Racing DX was priced somewhere in the vicinity of $65,000.

On what has transpired with prices in an open market, prices of this calibre could not possibly have been realized without exclusive rights and the prices set under the exclusive arrangements denied many operators the opportunity to operate these games.

This was all made abundantly clear with the Daytona's, of which over 400 pieces have been sold into a competitive market for around $36,000 each, when knowledgeable industry people estimate a maximum of 120 pieces would have been sold under exclusive distribution

Sega who have one way or another sold that 400 odd original, factory made Daytona's into Australia under open market conditions, have at least tripled their sales numbers to what they could have optimistically expected to sell with enforced exclusivity.

Yet they are party to a legal action that sets them against the rest of the Australian industry, and which must ultimately cost them a fortune in sales.

What are Sega's motives?

There is no question of genuine copyright infringement here, Sega's products are in no way endangered and there is no argument that holds water for allowing one company in a country of 17 million, a large operator at that, a monopoly on a product that can be sold in large numbers by reputable dealers, at competitive prices.

Forcing operators to buy "must have" products off their major competitor at thousands of dollars over the price they would pay in a competitive market is wrong and severely restrictive to industry growth.

* "MONOPOLY"

Many times in the past we have been subject to complaints at our use of the word "monopoly" and it's deriatives in relation to exclusive rights.

Oxford Dictionary says;

monopoly:	*exclusive trading position, sole posession or control*
monopolist:	*holder or supporter of monopoly*
monopolize:	*obtain exclusive possession or control*

If exclusive distribution rights are not a monopoly of the product they cover........what are they?

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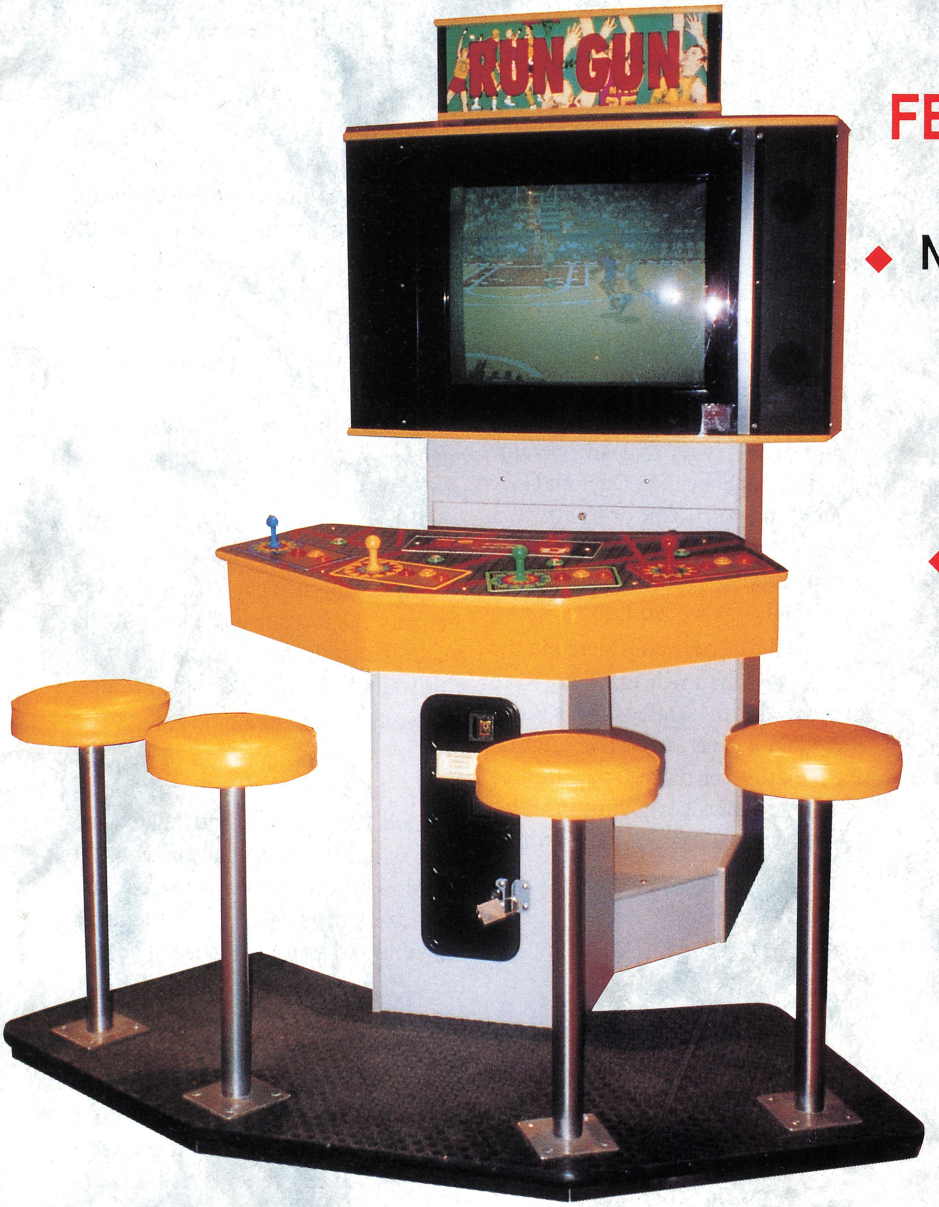

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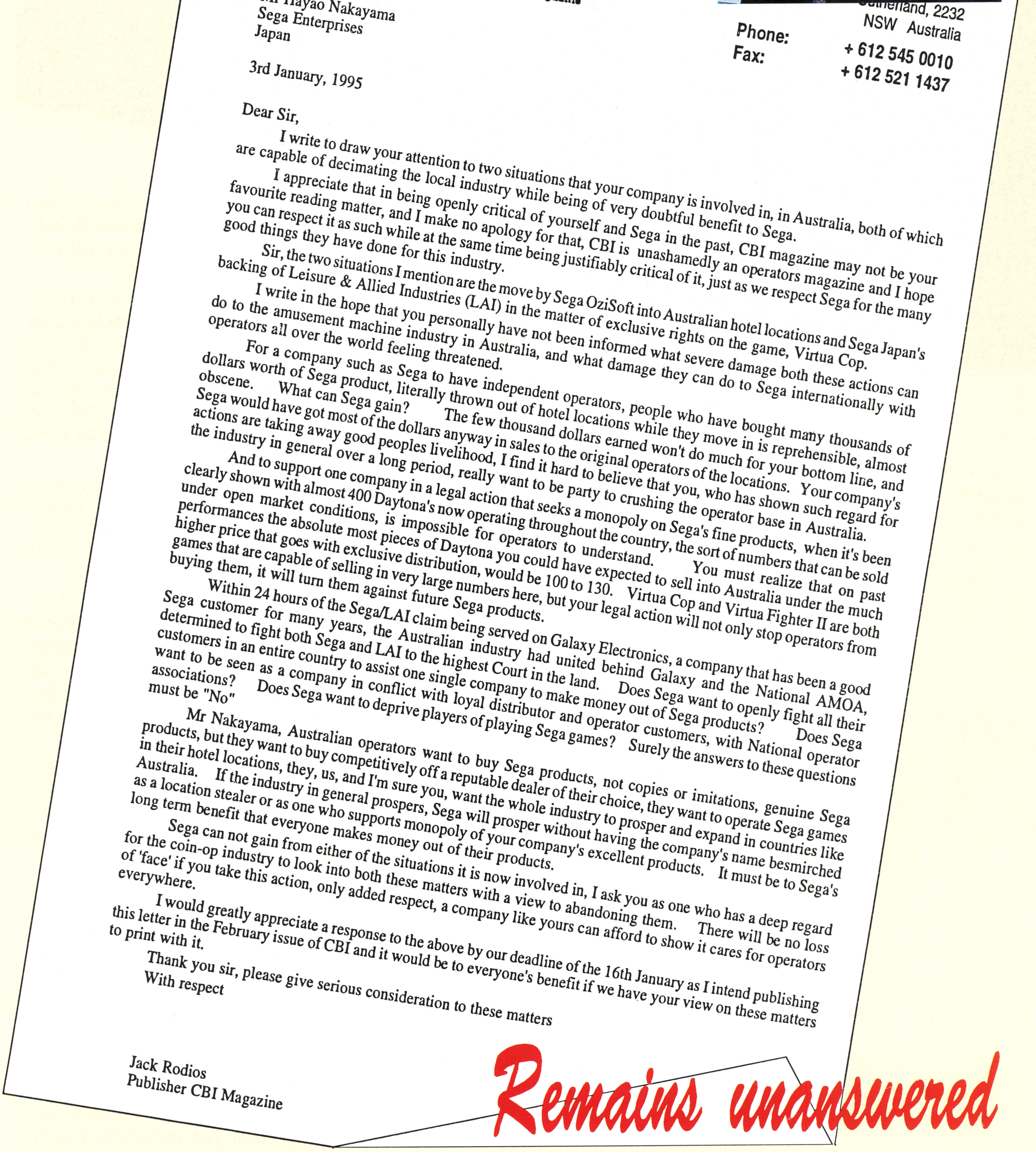
Letter to Nakayama



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Mr Hayao Nakayama
Sega Enterprises
Japan

3rd January, 1995

Dear Sir,

I write to draw your attention to two situations that your company is involved in, in Australia, both of which are capable of decimating the local industry while being of very doubtful benefit to Sega.

I appreciate that in being openly critical of yourself and Sega in the past, CBI magazine may not be your favourite reading matter, and I make no apology for that, CBI is unashamedly an operators magazine and I hope you can respect it as such while at the same time being justifiably critical of it, just as we respect Sega for the many good things they have done for this industry.

Sir, the two situations I mention are the move by Sega OziSoft into Australian hotel locations and Sega Japan's backing of Leisure & Allied Industries (LAI) in the matter of exclusive rights on the game, Virtua Cop.

I write in the hope that you personally have not been informed what severe damage both these actions can do to the amusement machine industry in Australia, and what damage they can do to Sega internationally with operators all over the world feeling threatened.

For a company such as Sega to have independent operators, people who have bought many thousands of dollars worth of Sega product, literally thrown out of hotel locations while they move in is reprehensible, almost obscene. What can Sega gain? The few thousand dollars earned won't do much for your bottom line, and Sega would have got most of the dollars anyway in sales to the original operators of the locations. Your company's actions are taking away good peoples livelihood, I find it hard to believe that you, who has shown such regard for the industry in general over a long period, really want to be party to crushing the operator base in Australia.

And to support one company in a legal action that seeks a monopoly on Sega's fine products, when it's been clearly shown with almost 400 Daytona's now operating throughout the country, the sort of numbers that can be sold under open market conditions, is impossible for operators to understand. You must realize that on past performances the absolute most pieces of Daytona you could have expected to sell into Australia under the much higher price that goes with exclusive distribution, would be 100 to 130. Virtua Cop and Virtua Fighter II are both games that are capable of selling in very large numbers here, but your legal action will not only stop operators from buying them, it will turn them against future Sega products.

Within 24 hours of the Sega/LAI claim being served on Galaxy Electronics, a company that has been a good Sega customer for many years, the Australian industry had united behind Galaxy and the National AMOA, determined to fight both Sega and LAI to the highest Court in the land. Does Sega want to openly fight all their customers in an entire country to assist one single company to make money out of Sega products? Does Sega want to be seen as a company in conflict with loyal distributor and operator customers, with National operator associations? Does Sega want to deprive players of playing Sega games? Surely the answers to these questions must be "No"

Mr Nakayama, Australian operators want to buy Sega products, not copies or imitations, genuine Sega products, but they want to buy competitively off a reputable dealer of their choice, they want to operate Sega games in their hotel locations, they, us, and I'm sure you, want the whole industry to prosper and expand in countries like Australia. If the industry in general prospers, Sega will prosper without having the company's name besmirched as a location stealer or as one who supports monopoly of your company's excellent products. It must be to Sega's long term benefit that everyone makes money out of their products.

Sega can not gain from either of the situations it is now involved in, I ask you as one who has a deep regard for the coin-op industry to look into both these matters with a view to abandoning them. There will be no loss of 'face' if you take this action, only added respect, a company like yours can afford to show it cares for operators everywhere.

I would greatly appreciate a response to the above by our deadline of the 16th January as I intend publishing this letter in the February issue of CBI and it would be to everyone's benefit if we have your view on these matters to print with it.

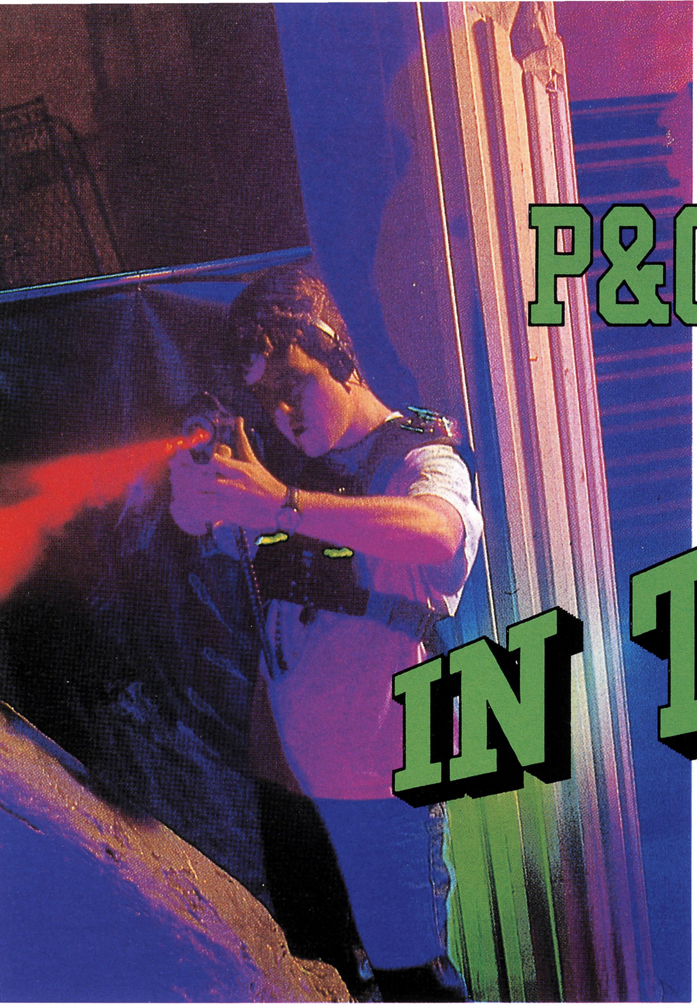
Thank you sir, please give serious consideration to these matters

With respect

Jack Rodios
Publisher CBI Magazine

Remains unanswered

P&C MICROS IN THE ZONE



P&C Micros is one of the most successful laser game manufacturers in the world. The Australian company now has offices in Melbourne and London ad well as selecting a number of Master Licensees to distribute its products around the world.

One hundred and three P&C Micros games are currently being operated and the company has a presence on every continent.

The company operates under a number of different names around the world: Megazone in Europe and the Middle East; Zone 4 in Africa; Darkzone in Canada; Laser Shots in South America; Zone 3 in Australia; Ultrazone in the USA; and in Korea.

New P&C Micros locations are opening up at an amazing pace and their laser tag products have become popular with both players and operators. From an operator's point of view, the P&C Micros system is extremely flexible and simple to use, but gives comprehensive business management.

For players, P&C Micros is constantly developing new games and features to keep the experience exciting and interesting. The company's R&D team consists of ten people, the largest of any laser game manufacturer in the world.

There are three different systems available from P&C Micros, depending on the size and expense operators want to go to.

System Z is state of the art and recommended for high traffic centres with an available floor space of 4,000+ square feet. The main attraction of System Z is it's comprehensive and flexible software. It has been specially designed to keep regular players coming back.

Some of the features include a photo ID system which is touch screen controlled and completely player driven; real role playing options for players and a frequent-player point system called z-creds.

Touch screen terminals provide players with instant access to their statistics, including the last 10 games played, league scores, current Z-creds and role playing status.

System Z also makes life easier for the operator. A touch screen interface makes the point of sale process simple - an on-screen till controls the cash draw, receipt printer and links all transactions to a staff member's button ID.

System Q is P&C Micros system for smaller locations which need a cheaper or more portable laser game. The system works off any IBM-compatible computer - or even a laptop PC if necessary.

Otherwise, System Q has all the features of an advanced laser game, including interactive maze devices which run from a small plug-in power pack or battery

P&C Micros final offering is System S, a target shooting game that requires minimal space. Set out in the style of Police Academy target ranges, players have to perform "challenges" which may contain up to 30 targets, voice interaction and sound and light effects.

The backpacks and phasers developed by P&C Micros are also state-of-the-art. There are five independent hit zones - four on the back pack and one on the phaser.

Some of the other features include a vibrator in the chest region to let players know they have been hit; headphones which relay game information; tri-colour LEDs with different flash rates to identify teams; and a light weight, long life battery.

The phaser has a slim hand grip and is very light to suit players of all ages. An LCD display on the back shows game stats and, to enhance safe game play, the phaser will only work when held with both hands.

While P&C Micros are leaders in the laser tag field, they still constantly try to make their products better. In a competitive and rapidly developing hi-tech game industry this type of commitment is essential.

With their large R&D team and their own operational experience, there is no doubt that P&C Micros continue to provide the innovations that both operators and players need.

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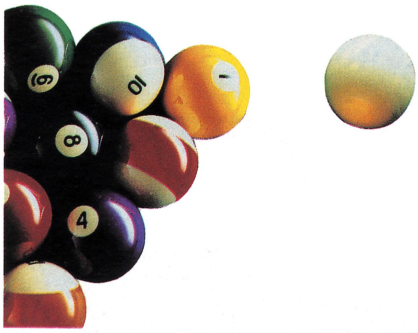

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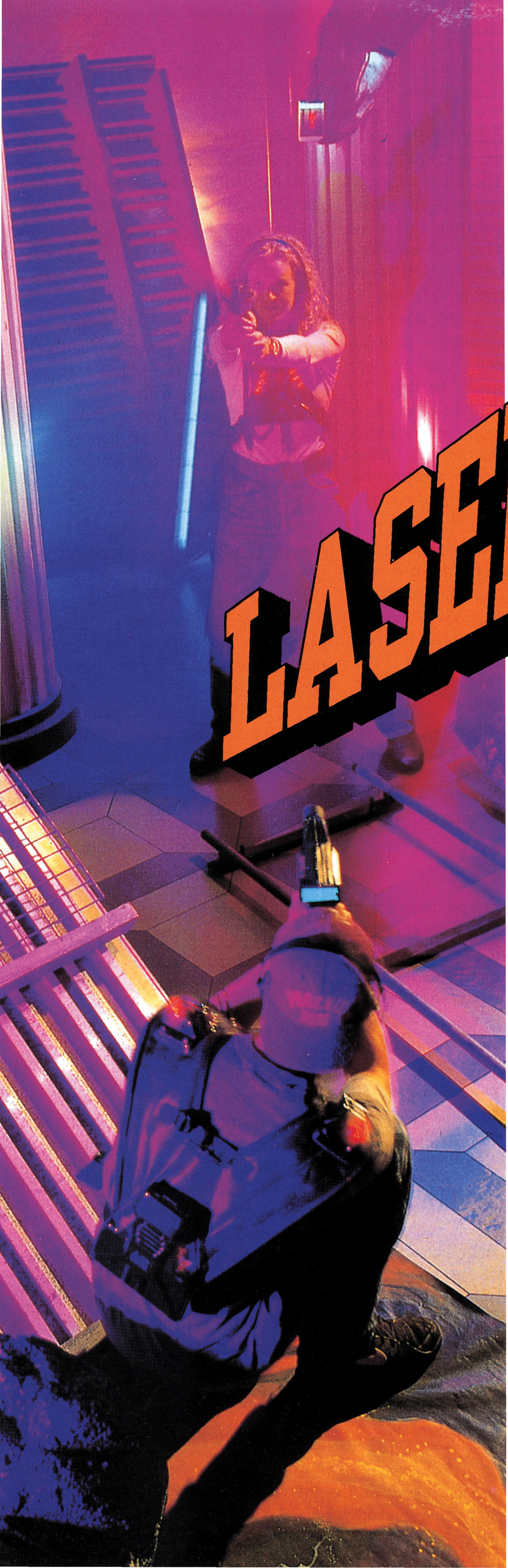

LASER GAMES

A LOT OF FUN AND 100% COMPATIBLE WITH COIN-OP GAMES

"Holding laser pistols close, my team mates and I creep through the smoky dimness of the labyrinth. Our goal - an assault on the alien base station of The Last City, bound to be heavily defended. Zap! A red beam tears through the haze and one of our team is down, his laser pack de-energised for a few seconds.

We return fire, red beams criss-crossing through the smoke, answering flashes rewarding our accuracy. The opposition is temporarily immobilised, we race in to take over the base..."

It is the realistic, rather than *virtually* realistic experience of laser games that has made them so popular. It's hi-tech enough to attract the current generation of computer-minded youth, but offers a level of interactivity that can't be achieved with even the most sophisticated video game or Virtual Reality machine.

"*You basically are the game. It takes the FEC from the passive to the active type of attraction - a modern day cops and robbers,*" says Kenn Schurek, president of the American laser game operator and manufacturer, Ascension Productions Inc.

Peter Moran, from P&C Micros in Australia, agrees: "*It delivers what virtual reality only promises. You're interacting with a computer when you set off mines and bases, but you're also interacting with people. That's what gives laser games the advantage*"

Laser game (or laser tag) centres are still expanding at an impressive rate, yet the concept has been around long enough to prove that it is not just a passing craze.

As long as you have the space, laser tag is extremely flexible, suiting a vast number of location types. Go cart tracks, mini golf courses, large, outdoor amusement parks, carnivals, malls, large, location based entertainment venues, small neighbourhood FECs... the list goes on. The centres can also be themed to suit many different types of location.

THEMING

As with most FEC concepts, laser games perform much better if they are well themed. It is essential to create a sense of fantasy as well as a definite storyline so players understand their objectives. A spaceship crash-landing

on a planet or a destroyed city are popular scenarios which also allow two or three teams to compete against each other.

Space Sport, the manufacturers of the Laser Storm system in the United States actually create specific themes for their clients and the arenas are designed accordingly. Their current storylines are Galactic Marauders (about "*two estranged twin brothers battling it out for control of the "Milky Main"*") and Circuit Commandos. In this one you are part of a commando group trying to destroy an evil virus which is about to wipe out the International Economic Computer Network.

Each game comes with coordinated graphics packages, customised rules and themed merchandise. Operators can apparently change themes with minimal down time.

And as Peter Moran points out, theming is also important because it can help to emphasise that laser tag is not a hi-tech blood sport - especially if you're aiming for family patronage. The authorities in countries like Singapore and Malaysia have even expressed concern about this aspect of the game.

"*We don't want to compare it to a macho type of war game*," he says. "*It's really got to throw people into an unreal environment - futuristic or fantastic, but not the real world.*

"*We don't want to emphasise the idea that you go around shooting people. It's not like shooting someone because they're not dead. There's no blood, there's no gore. You're using a laser beam not a gun and you're bobbing and weaving... if anything, it's an alternative form of sport.*"

IT'S A SPORT

The idea of laser tag as a sport is borne out by the number of professionals getting into it to relieve stress. It is becoming increasingly common for company groups to play a regularly - they say that there's no way you can think of work while you're playing laser tag!

Most laser game players are aged between 15 and 25 years but there is also a smaller, but substantial group aged from 25 to 35. These are the young professionals who are looking for an alternative to running around the block.

Leagues and other organised competitions are also popular and are a good way of drawing regular visits from enthusiastic players. Most centres hold a regular competition on a set night of the week for their members. For experienced players, the strategy of playing in a team and playing solo is entirely different.

Space Sport actually organised a national Laser Storm competition for their franchisees and they plan to make it an annual event.

KEEPING THEM COMING BACK

Laser game manufacturers are constantly developing new features for their games to keep regular players coming back. The technology has come a long way in the ten or so years since laser tag first appeared on the market. The slow, clumsy and inaccurate infra-red systems have long since been replaced by single beam laser systems.

These days the phasers are extremely accurate and the packs are light and durable. In fact, the equipment as a whole is very reliable. From a player's point of view, however, the most significant developments in the past few years have been in software.

The Australian company, Laserforce have completely rewritten their software in the past 12 months adding new fun features. The most popular has been the "rapid fire" where players who score five hits in a row are rewarded with a fully automatic laser.

While a new player who just walks in off the street will only get involved with the most basic aspects of the game, regular players need new features and experiences to keep them interested. This is mostly achieved by creating "characters" with various abilities or arena features which make the gameplay more complex.

Laserforce have developed their own c role-playing game called Space Marines. Players take on specific roles and have different powers, and to make it more interesting, players can fire "missiles" which do extra damage. However, at the same time the targeted player gets warning sirens that someone is trying to achieve a lock-on to his battlesuit.

P&C Micros (who operate under various names around the world including Zone 3, Zone 4, Megazone and Dark Zone) also offer their members role-playing options.

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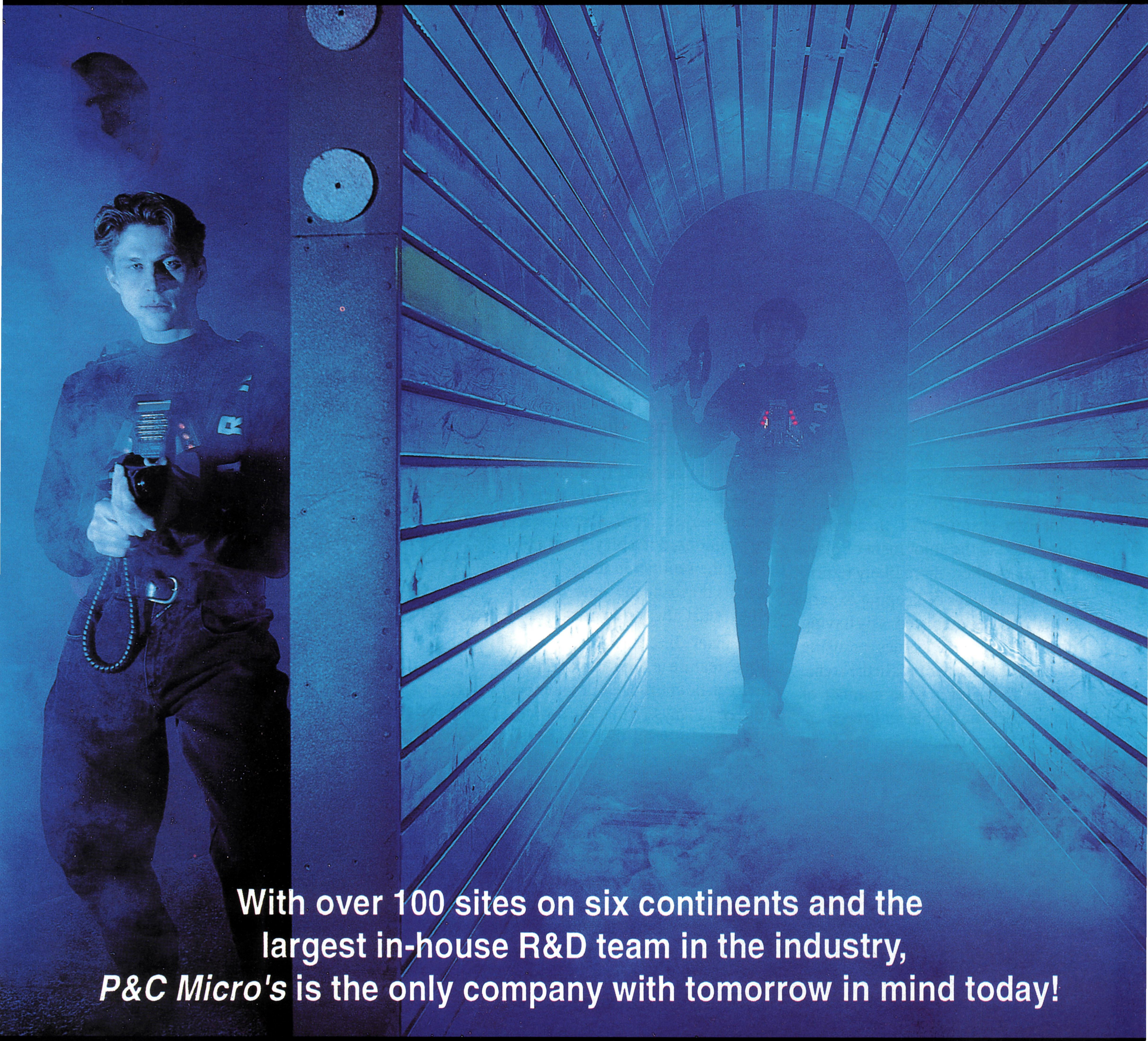
Zone 3

The Real Life Laser Game



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P & C MICRO'S

LASER GAMES

They can choose an alias and program in special abilities like shields, smart bombs, rapid fire, medic, power boosts and ammo clips. Touch screen terminals also give players access to their statistics (hits taken, accuracy of shots, scores, etc) over the last 10 game played.

They also have a special "novice" button which gives new players extra protection so they don't just get blasted away by experienced players. Laserforce also protects its newer players with a software controlled handicap system. All these little things add to the enjoyment of players, making them more likely return.

Other ways of keeping experienced players interested is by having different types of games or using interactive maze features in the arena. Things like limiting the number of lives (requiring the player to re-energise at a special reloading zone) all add to the strategic aspect of the game.

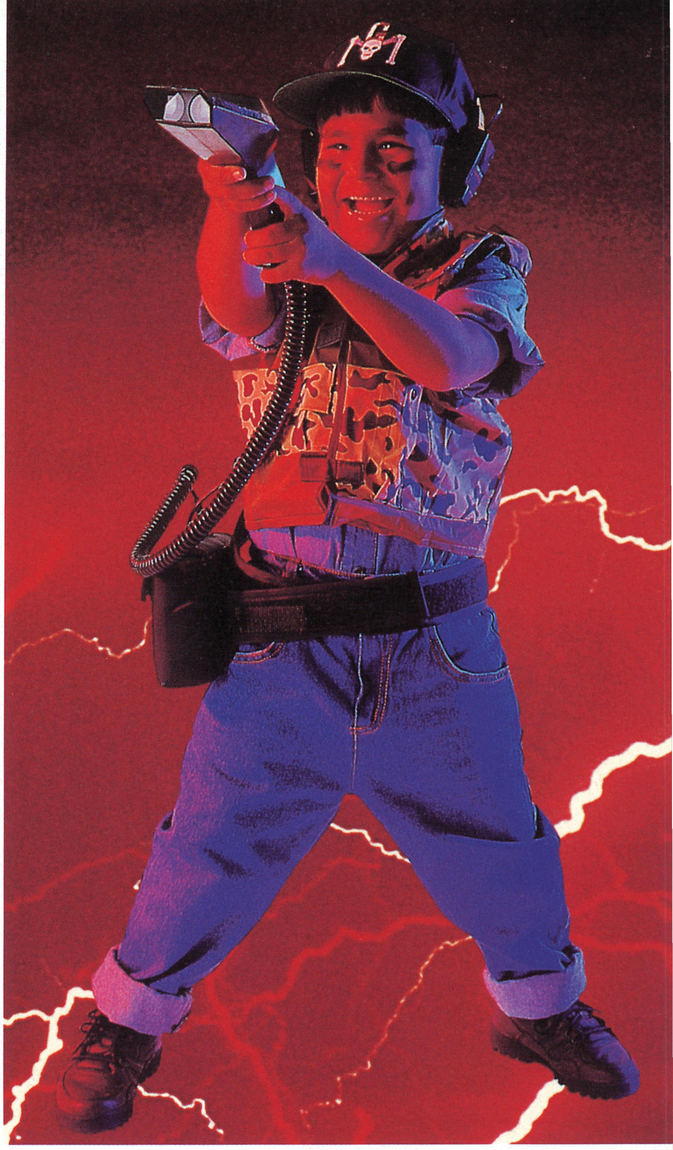
Other features include mines, bases and energisers or reloading points. When it comes to mines, there are many options: they can be configured as universal, or team identified. The UK firm, Pulsar International, has software which automatically and randomly changes the position of the mines within the arena to keep players on their toes. Alternatively, P&C Micros program their mines to destroy everything in their path except the player who activated it.

Bases also add an extra element of strategy to the game, especially in a team situation. The teams have to defend their own base while trying to destroy the enemy base.

Other interactive features include P&C Micros' sentinels, which act as a guardian of the arena. The sentinel can be used to protect an area or to keep the game moving by flushing players from otherwise secure positions, but a player can only destroy the sentinel in the delay between its dormant and active phases so they must always be alert.

Pulsar International have a unique feature called a starblaster which can be configured in a number of different ways. When the devices are successfully hit they award the player points or make them invincible. While in invincible mode the player is immune from being hit by mines or other lasers and their achievements during the game determines the time of invincibility.

These are only some examples of the features which can make a playing arena more interesting and challenging and most manufacturers have many variations. The point is that most successful centres regularly upgrade their software to provide new features so players don't become bored.



Laser tag games are appealing to almost all ages and a large proportion of players are female.

"A good part of the business is the 'loyalty factor', people who come back continuously need new things. It's the same principle as changing the game in your video cabinet," says Peter Moran.

AUDITING AND MANAGEMENT

While software improvement has led to greater player satisfaction in recent years, it has also resulted in many benefits to the operator. All the laser game systems come with software that looks after cash control, scoring and charging.

Operators should look for a comprehensive but simple system which tracks revenue and staff, and automates time consuming tasks. The aim is to have a smooth running centre with minimum staff.

All the computer systems have some sort of auditing facility to provide information on game time, game length, number of players in each game which can then be checked against the cash register takings. This

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LASER FORCE

ENTERTAINMENT OF THE FUTURE

ARMOURY
ENTRY
SPACE MARINES
MOVE IT

COMPETITIVE EDGE, *LASERFORCE* has all the feature you would expect in a world class laser game such as great sound effects, reliability, bright lasers, superb battery life, data base records and faultless back-up service. *LASERFORCE* has numerous features that are exclusive or were first developed by *LASERFORCE.*

★ **REAL TIME SCORING** - No down loading, scores are registered and displayed in milliseconds.

★ **RAPID FIRE & INVULNERABILITY** - Score 5 hits in a row and go to fully automatic laser. Players can also achieve "Invulnerability, Missiles, Nuke and Pay back".

★ **DIGITISED SOUND EFFECTS** - Real time sound effects in full digitised mode. Players receive instructions and advice during the game.

★ **INFRA-RED RECEIVE** - Our guns receive infra-red which gives the leading edge effect of "LOCK ON TONE" and also a fire and hit noise. A necessary feature but exclusive to *LASERFORCE.*

★ **CONTINUAL GAME** - Operators can operate a continual game with 100% accurate scoring to maximise profits.

★ **FULL ROLE PLAYING FACILITIES** - The Space Marines formate gives roleplaying features such as medic, 'scout heavy weapons, commander and ammo carrier.

LASERFORCE has been established for over 7 years. The Brisbane site is the longest continual operating laser game centre in the world. A large number of *LASERFORCE* centres are open in Australian and it is now the country's fastest growing game.

AUD$2,500 off the price if you visit our show case centre in Brisbane, Australia.

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LASER GAMES

can also help operators pinpoint what days of the week and what times of the day players are at a peak. Different pricing schedules can be used for peak and low periods and for team nights and normal, solo play.

Most systems also have a player data base where all the details of regular players are collated. P&C Micros keeps all the statistics of the player's previous 5 or 10 games, depending on the level of membership, while Laserforce produces a weekly average list that ranks all the players form top to bottom.

Another option offered by these two companies is direct mail advertising. The Laserforce system, for example, allows the operator to select a mailing list under the criteria of age, join-up date, amount of games played, date since last played, postcode and sex.

"*Such simple things as a mailing list of customers who are having their birthday soon and may be looking for ideas for a party, or maybe a list of all those players who have not been in for a while and might not be aware of your latest promotions... all these little things that we offer help in getting that little extra bit of income,*" says Laserforce's Len Kelly.

DEDICATED V'S PORTABLE ARENAS

One of the latest developments in laser games is the portable arena. Several companies, including Ascension Productions, Laser Storm and Pulsar International produce inflatable mazes which are probably a bit more flexible than the knockdown type.

An inflatable arena like Ascension's 1400 ft² Battle Cruiser inflates in 10 minutes with the help of several low power fans. It's ideal for carnivals, corporate and special events, dance parties and other similar events. It also brings a bit of flexibility to an FEC because it can be moved around the centre, or if you happen to own more than one location, from centre to centre.

It is an easy, economical way to introduce laser tag to your FEC or local shopping centre. And for operators willing to do special events, exhibitions and fetes, it can be very lucrative.

Ascension's Kenn Schurek reckons that two or three good carnivals can pay for the system.

While not as mobile as the inflatable arenas, P&C Micros has a scaled down, cheaper version of their laser game system which they recommend for customers who are concerned about size, cost and portability. The system "Q" has proven popular with developing markets like South America and locations such as seasonal resorts, hotels and small amusement centres.

The software runs off any IBM-compatible computer, including a lap top if required. The system can be set up at any location with a suitable playing arena, even outdoors, weather and light permitting.

P&C Micros have even designed multi-function targets for their system Q. These are small, low cost units which act as base stations, reloads and mines. They don't require networking and can run from either a small plug-in power pack or optional battery.

For the high traffic locations however, nothing can compare to a well designed, dedicated arena - a maze with ramps, dead ends, caverns, smoke machines, shields and barriers, booby traps and energisers, lights, sounds...

Having enough height to go to more than one level, or at least split level is an enormous advantage.

"*Multi-level is really the way to go,*" says Peter Moran. "*Three levels is excellent with several ramps. It adds a third dimension to the game!*"

Establishing a laser tag centre can cost anything from $60,000 to half a million dollars, depending on how complex you want to make the arena. But if you have done your homework properly, and built a centre that suits the local population, manufacturers estimate that you should have paid for the system and arena by about nine months.

Even allowing for such things as down time (which should be minimal), staffing costs and insurance, they say your profit should not be less than 60% of gross. So operated properly, a laser tag system will generate a decent level of revenue.

LASER TAG AND COIN-OP

Perhaps the most important aspect of laser tag is its absolute compatibility with coin-op amusement machines. As the FEC concept takes hold, many amusement centre operators are looking to provide multi-activity venues - and laser games provide an excellent solution.

The result is a surge in the number of laser tag facilities all over the world. Manufacturers have been overwhelmed with the demand in relatively new markets like South

PULSAR
LASER GAMES
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UNLIMITED LIVES!!
UNLIMITED FUN!!!
ONLY £2 PER GAME
PULSAR
LASER GAMES

Several companies are now marketing Laser Game systems with inflatable arenas and they are proving excellent money spinners at carnivals and fairs.

America, the Asia Pacific region and the Middle East.

P&C Micros nominates South East Asia as its major area for growth over the next 18 months and Pulsar International believes that most of its expansion will be in the Middle East and the Pacific Basin.

"The best laser games are located where they are complemented with other attractions such as big arcades or FECs," says Len Kelly. *"This assists in all the attractions feeding off each other. Stand alone centres can be profitable but the location becomes very critical."*

Just as many operators are looking to add laser tag to their centres, most laser game centre operators end up adding coin machines to their venues. Manufacturers certainly recommend that their customers allow space for amusement games as laser tag usually attracts the same sort of crowd as an amusement centre.

Operators have reported increases of 15-30% on their cash box takings after establishing laser tag within their centres - and this is on top of the earnings from the laser game itself.

Another advantage for operators looking to establish an FEC is that laser games can be put into what would otherwise be inconvenient or unusable spaces.

You can use the basement of a building, or in a high street location, the second floor is often rented out cheaply if empty. Only the entrance to the laser tag centre has to be visible - running up or down a flight of stairs can even add to the excitement of starting the game.

NEW CONCEPTS

There have been many improvements to laser tag over the years, and manufacturers are now developing entirely new concepts with the technology.

P&C Micros have created what they call their system "S", a shooting game loosely based on the police/army style of target ranges. One, two or three players can enter the game at one time and new players enter every few minutes.

Once inside, players face challenges in a series of rooms, or cells, which present various scenarios. Each room may contain up to 30 targets, voice interaction with sound and light effects. Operators can program challenges if they chose and there are several different types of games and difficulty levels.

The small size of the game makes it ideal for locations where space is at a premium, such as existing amusement centres, shopping malls and carnivals. The game caters for up to 60 players an hour based on a 3-minute game which is excellent for high traffic venues and gives a good return for a relatively small space.

Pulsar International also has a unique and very interesting laser game available. They call it their 2nd generation system and it involves multiple powered attack vehicles which are piloted around a custom built maze arena. Players crew these "Cyberpods" in pairs, one being the driver and the other the gunner.

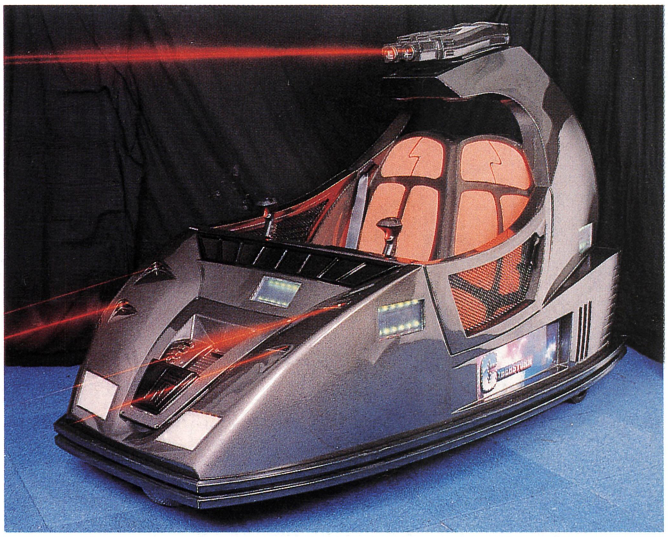
All the pods are armed with multiple lasers and an overhead cannon which interact with the other vehicles and the arena, just like in a traditional laser game. It's a totally new concept and has caused a bit of a stir in the UK. It will be interesting to see if the game takes off or not.

SUMMARY

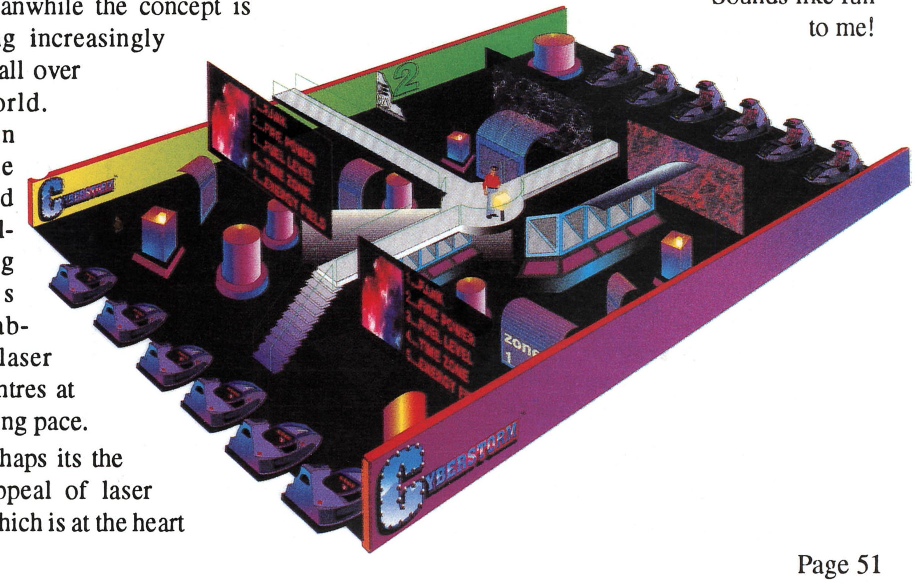
As laser game technology develops we will see more and varied games and continual improvements in the equipment and software for the standard laser tag game.

Meanwhile the concept is becoming increasingly popular all over the world. FECs in both the developed and developing markets are establishing laser game centres at an amazing pace.

Perhaps its the broad appeal of laser games which is at the heart of their success. It's a sporting activity where people can interact with each other, yet it's also hi-tech and exciting. Families play, corporate groups play, as do kids and adults of all ages and both sexes.



Above: Pulsar's Cyberpod and below is a typical CyberStorm layout for 12 of the 2 player vehicles



"It's so popular because each game is different and it involves players having good old fashioned fun in a safe, hi-tech environment," says Len Kelly

"Laserforce attracts a wide demographic spectrum. The perception is that it is a kids game but the truth is that over 70% of our players are over 16. And about 20% female"

And says Richard Marriott-Smith from Pulsar International: *"The laser game industry is a successful multi-billion dollar business and the answer is simple. It simply exploits the 'Walter Mitty' aspect of human nature in that, for a brief time, the player can assume the role of his or her hero and save the world from the dreaded intergalactic enemy..."*

Sounds like fun to me!

Talking to the Operators

With the close of 1994, several operators from around the world were quizzed on how they saw the industry last year and their feelings on this year. The basic questions asked were

1. How was 1994 for you?
2. The best performers in equipment and type of location?
3. The worst in equipment and type of location?
4. The major development or change in 1994?
5. The major issues facing the industry in 1995?
6. Feeling on the future of the industry, optimistic or pessimistic?

Though from operators scattered around the world there were many common threads in the answers that should give many manufacturers something to think about.

UNITED KINGDOM

John Bollom

John Bollom's company, Amusement Equipment Co Ltd, operates arcades in holiday areas of the UK, he also sits on the Board of Namco Europe and acts as a consultant to the company.

That would be enough for most people in this industry, but John is also Chairman of BACTA, the influential British trade association.

1994: Only average

Good Performers:

Big Dedicated pieces like Daytona and Ridge Racer, small prize payout machines (AWP's)

Poor Performers:

PCB's (no good, new games) Cranes due to large numbers now being operated

Major Developments:

Move toward larger arcades (15,000 sq ft and larger) which can be good in right location, but very capital intensive.

Major Issues:

The major issue in the UK by far is the new License Duty of £250.00 per year placed on most amusement machines

The Future:

Generally optimistic, but very concerned about the new tax

BRAZIL

Claudio Antoun

Claudio is the highly respected chief of Interlink Ltd, one of Brazil's largest operators of both street and arcade locations in the country's major cities. A successful 1994 has left him very optimistic for the future of coin-op in Brazil.

1994 A very good year due to good product and Brazil's improving economy.

Good Performers:

Redemption games and the first of our new Family Fun Centres

Poor Performers:

PCB conversion games and street locations , due mainly to home game systems getting coin-op games too early

Major Developments:

The new technology used in the video games like Daytona and the big variety available in redemption games.

Major Issues:

The high price of equipment and the still, generally bad image that the industry has

The Future:

With the new stability in the Brazilian economy we are quite optimistic as we believe the industry will benefit greatly from low inflation and a strong economy.

STAND OUTS

Daytona appears to have had a bigger effect on the coin-op industry than any other driving game since Pole Position. Though all big dedicated games were the subject of much discussion, Daytona stood out like a sore toe with virtually all operators spoken t

SEGA
DAYTONA USA
RACE LEADER
RACE LEADER
1
2

AUSTRALIA

Barry Pitman

Barry is an Australian street operator with a good sized operation in south Queensland, he is adapting to the changing face of the industry, but unlike many is wisely doing it out of cash flow and not on credit.

1994: Disastrous for PCB games which were his main product and he was forced to switch operation around to well over 50% Pinballs and dedicated video to remain competitive.

Good Performers:

Pinballs and games like Lethal Enforcers II were best. Pubs and Night Clubs were by far the best in locations

Poor Performers:

PCB conversion games and street locations where the main income was derived from kids

Major Developments:

The leap to big dedicated games which has forced operators to switch their thinking from $2000 games to $40,000 games

Major Issues:

Exclusive Rights on top video products, higher location commissions, big companies forcing out small operators. The loss of traditional street locations and getting the kids back to playing coin-op games

The Future:

Generally pessimistic as the changes that have to be made, take time and are very costly. Is concerned that many smaller operators who don't have the resources to change with the industry will be forced sell out

SINGAPORE

Paul Poh

Paul heads up the Playhouse Group, a large operator of amusement arcades in Singapore. A good 1994 has him in a good frame of mind for 1995 even though he's not one bit impressed with many of the Singapore Governments regulations on the industry.

The best performers for the Playhouse Group were the big dedicated games like Suzuka, Ridge Racer and Daytona while the worst were the PCB games

Major issues in Singapore are the Government regulations on game approval, space and the banning of many redemption games that are deemed to be predominantly of chance instead of skill.

Paul is reasonably optimistic for the future of the industry as it now exists, but is concerned that newcomers may attempt to expand coin-op in Singapore too quickly and jeopardise the steady development that is under way.

STAND OUTS

PCB conversion games have not just been weak in your country, they have basically performed miserably all over the world through 1994 and are causing severe pain to many operators

BRAZIL

Ricardo El Campo

Ricardo's company Ric Toys Ltda, operates arcades and in shopping centres in Sao Paulo and other centres in Brazil and though the company did not have an outstanding 1994 he is generally quite happy with what they have achieved.

1994 A reasonable year which holds promise for this year.

Good Performers:

Pinball and Redemption games. They are attracting new players and can hold up against the huge number of home video systems and games coming into the country

Poor Performers:

PCB conversion games and street locations , once again due to home game systems

Major Developments:

The technology in the new games

Major Issues:

Home video games. Manufacturers have to increase the amount of time between the coin-op game and the home game version going into the market

The Future:

"We are optimistic because of the simulators, Pinballs and good options in redemption"

Talking to the Operators

HONG KONG

Fred Milner

Fred is the well known owner of Hong Kong's Bondeal Ltd who operate arcades in Hong Kong, China and several other SE Asian countries. He remains optimistic for the general coin-op industry in Asia and South East Asia, but sees the real money as being in the big centres and mini theme parks.

1994 A hard year, but a pretty good one.

Good Performers:

Redemption games, the big dedicated driving games and Soft Play areas.

Poor Performers:

PCB conversion games and Pinballs in Hong Kong where they fell back after a strong start. Hong Kong arcades owing to the restrictions imposed by the Government.

Major Developments:

The swing to total family entertainment in big Centres.

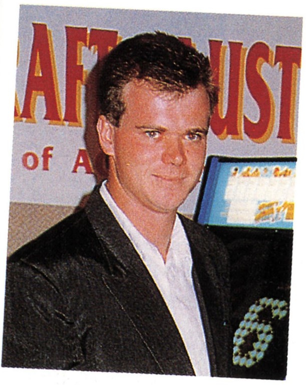
Major Issues:

Government regulations that are restricting trade in many regions. The high price of coin equipment that is making it extremely difficult for the industry's smaller operators to compete successfully with home game systems and other forms of entertainment

The Future:

Fred sees the future in SE Asia and Asia as being extremely bright if the industry does not get steamrolled in a regulatory manner by bureaucrats who have little knowledge of the way the coin business works. He believes the shift to big games and big centres is inevitable and that street operators must rationalise their operations or suffer more pain.

AUSTRALIA



Darren Creally

Darren operates street locations in the suburbs of Sydney and though relatively young can boast 15 odd years in the industry as he's been in it since leaving school. Like a lot of street operators he's been hard hit by the drop off in conversion game takings and the general weakness in all kid type locations

1994: Hard. Sold off a lot of kids sites with older equipment and went deeper into Pinballs and small dedicated.

Good Performers:

Driving games and Lethal Enforcers with Pinballs doing OK. Of conversion games Raiden II was a stand out.

Poor Performers:

Kids locations with even video rental shops dropping off, expensive conversion games that are too repetitive

Major Developments:

The move to the "big toys" which Darren seen as not a good one for street operators.

Major Issues:

Exclusive Rights on the good games and the high prices that seem likely to follow. High prices generally and most importantly, getting the kids back onto the machines.

The Future:

Generally optimistic. Knows it's going to be a different industry to what it has been, but believes a couple of good games can always lift the industry up.

ISRAEL

Uri Kenak

Uri is a small site operator in Israel that sees the Middle East as a big development area for coin-op in the next few years. He's quite optimistic for the future of coin-operated amusements, but leans towards pessimism in relation to small operators.

1994 was an OK year with the good performers being any games that appealed to adults in adult locations. Video conversions were not a good performer generally.

He sees the major problem facing the industry as the high price of equipment. Though the copy problem has been largely defused in most countries, in Israel, the high price of original games is forcing operators who wouldn't normally flirt with copies, to do so when they are available, to compete with those operators that are continually operating copies.

He believes the future of coin-op in Israel is in family entertainment, similar to most parts of the world

Nostalgia Gold

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TEKKEN

FIGHTING GAMES AREN'T DEAD..............NAMCO PRODUCE THE GOODS IN AN ECONOMICAL PACKAGE THAT SHOULD PROVE A BOON TO STREET OPERATORS ALL ROUND THE WORLD

The release of *Virtua Fighter 2* and more recently Namco's *Tekken*, has shown the doubters, (including one at CBI) that there is still a Hell of a lot of life left in video fighting games. These are quality games that players will find impossible to walk past and Tekken, the main subject here is a game that can help get the kids back to the street located video games that they seem to have deserted lately.

Namco's concentration on big dedicated games and work in other areas like redemption while everyone else on the planet was building fighting games did not go unnoticed and many may think that they have left their run too late with *Tekken*, but we don't see it that way.

Late they may be, but Namco have come up with a game here that has enormous potential and you can buy it out of a competitive market, without being forced to part company with an arm and a leg.

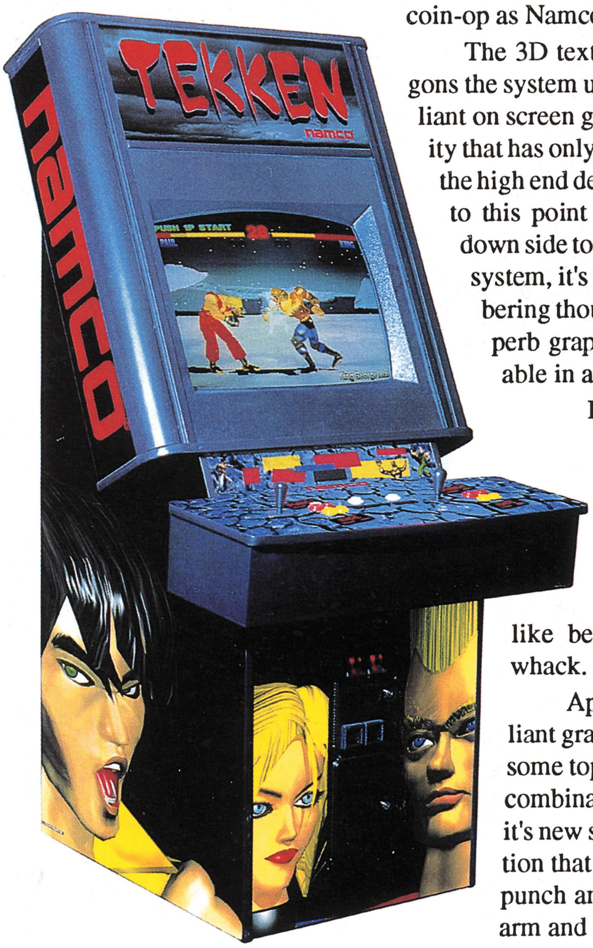
From first sight of the uncompleted game at the AM Show in Tokyo it was obvious that Namco were onto something, after seeing the finished product, we'd have to say that they have exceeded ours and many others expectations, this has the makings of a very good game.

The guts of *Tekken* is the new graphics driver board developed by Namco and Sony for use in Sony's soon to be released Playstation home video system and brought over to coin-op as Namco System 11.

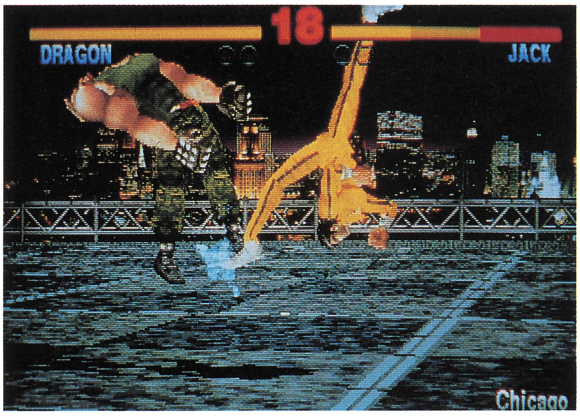
The 3D texture shaded polygons the system uses, produce brilliant on screen graphics of a quality that has only been available in the high end dedicated games up to this point and if there is a down side to this great looking system, it's the somewhat sobering thought that these superb graphics will be available in a home system.

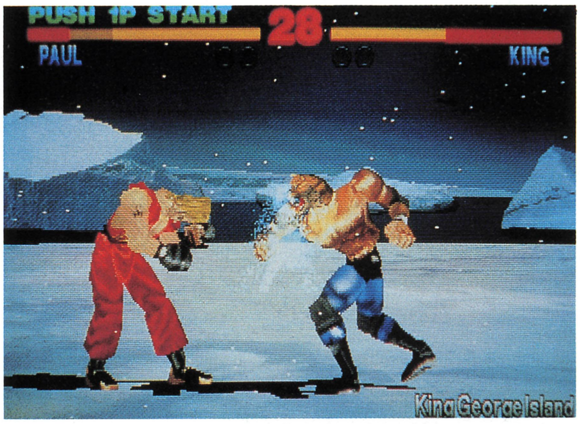
However it's not time to get morbid about that, coin-op is going to get first whack at them and in *Tekken* it looks like being a real good whack.

Apart from it's brilliant graphics, *Tekken* has some top class moves and combinations built around it's new style control function that allows players to punch and kick with each arm and leg individually.



The realism of Tekken game play is sure to get players in, and to ensure no one misses it, Namco have housed this top game in one of the most attractive cabinets we have seen





This aspect of the game provides the most realistic fighting movements yet seen, allowing the player to get as close to true martial arts fighting as it's possible to get without putting the old toga on and getting into the ring, yet at all times Tekken remains a game where the players can enjoy themselves, a game they can have fun with.

Many of us who write about coin-op games were starting to get very bored with fighting games, none were doing much in the market place and it was getting increasingly harder to get enthused over them, but in the space of a few months we've had *Virtua Fighter 2* and this good game, *Tekken* put into the market and they have shown in no uncertain terms that fighting games are far from finished

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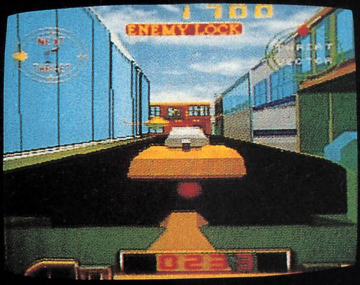

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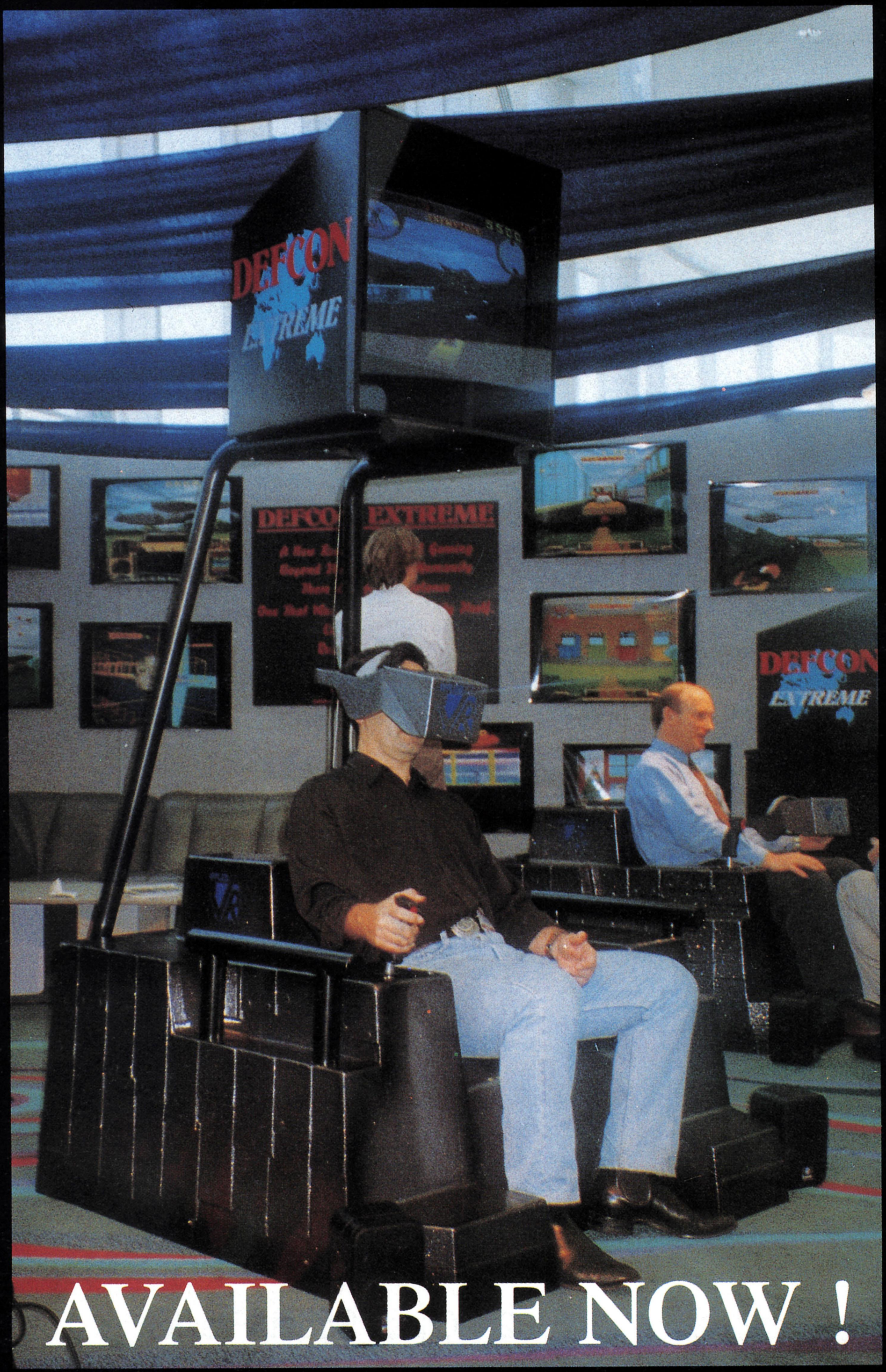
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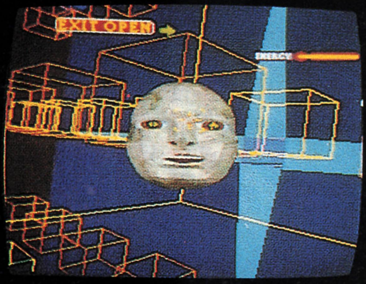
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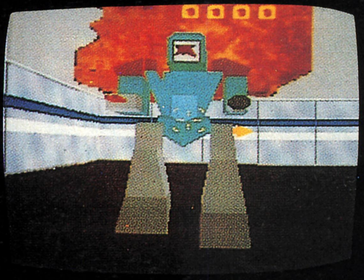

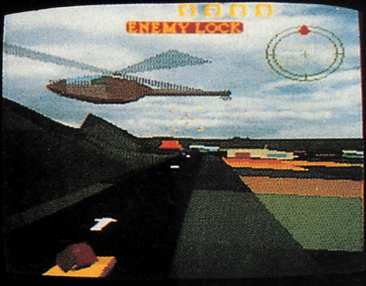

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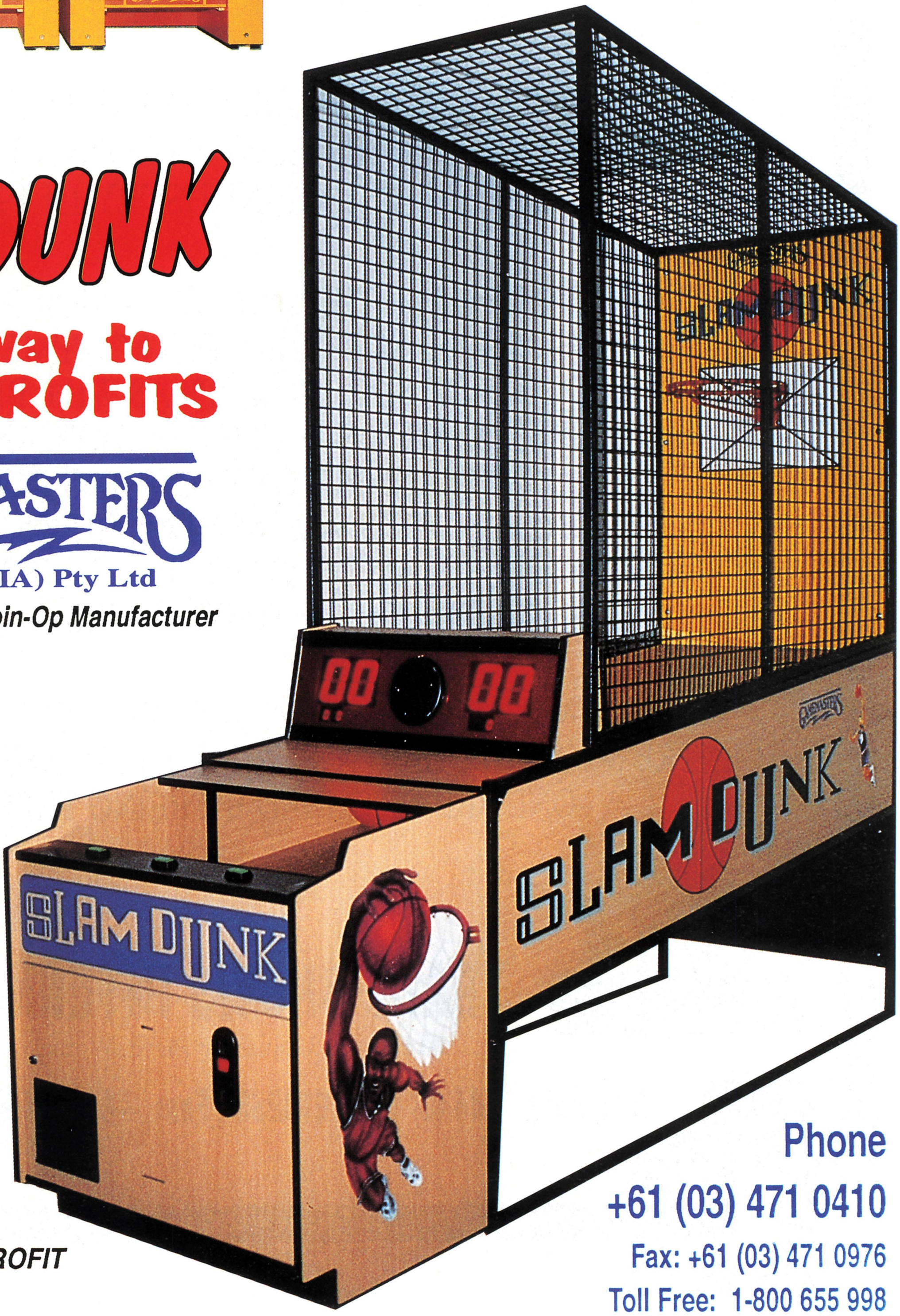
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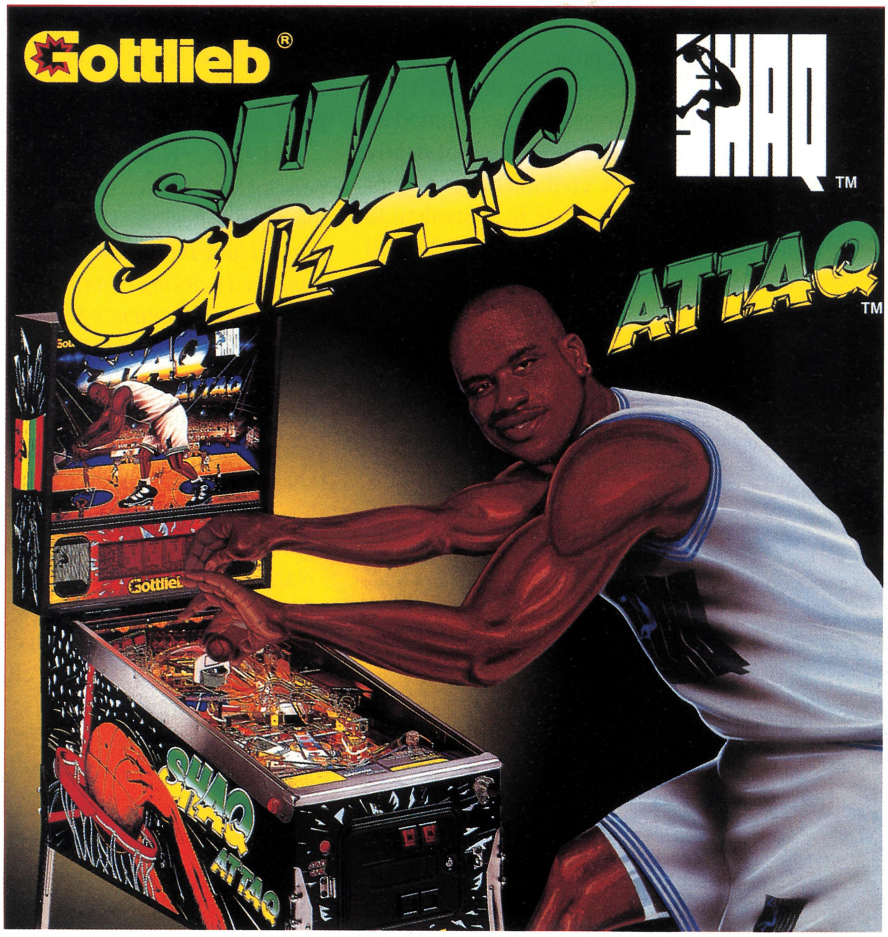

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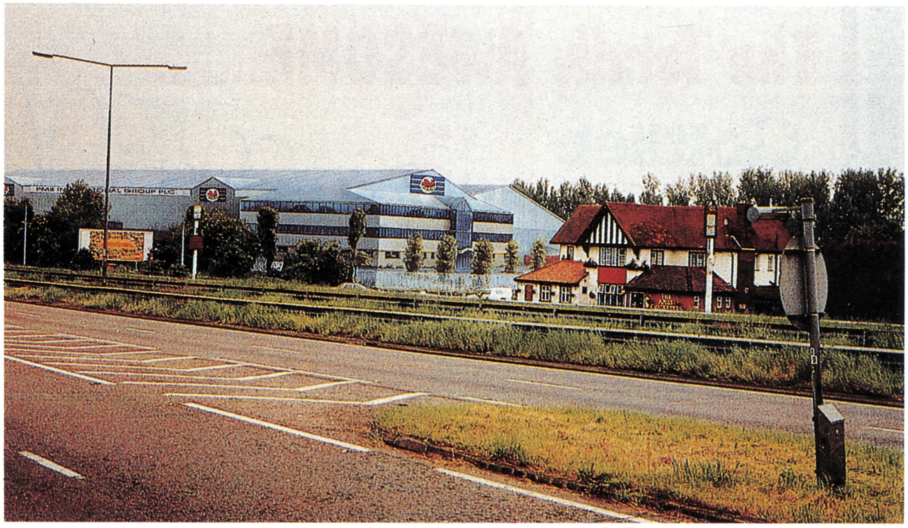

An artist's impression of the new PMS factory in Essex

Amusement industry toy giants PMS International have announced the building of a new European corporate headquarters and warehouse in Basildon, Essex, UK.

The new three-storey building is already known as International House - even though it won't be open for business until March next year. It will also centralise the operations of one of the world's largest suppliers of toys and novelties to the amusement and theme park industries.

The nine acre site will be extensively landscaped and features a picturesque man-made lake. Construction began during May of this year and the building itself has already been erected. From now until March 1995, the internal work will be done, as well as the landscaping, testing of systems and services, and the stocking of the warehouse.

The building has a floor area of 285,000 square feet (24,486 square metres), including 6,000 ft^2 of air conditioned trade showrooms, and it replaces the multiple warehouses the company used in the Essex area. It will also be the largest warehouse in Essex.

Managing director, Paul Beverley, said: "*We have developed a reputation in our business for cutting-edge prices, and this centralisation will enable us to sustain our competitiveness.*"

The building project will cost around £5 million and house more than 170 employees. The premises will accommodate 275,000 cartons, the equivalent of nearly 1,650 twenty foot containers. The floor area of warehouse alone is equivalent to the size of four football pitches and it will cost £45,000 just to paint the floor with epoxy paint

Inside the warehouse, PMS will install the most up to date mechanised good handling equipment available. Goods will move around the building on large railway-type, four wheel trolleys pulled by electric tugs. These trucks can be hooked up to form mini-trains.

The company's effectiveness will also be enhanced by state of the art computer and telecommunications systems.

Director Neil Beverley, who has been personally involved in the development of the custom-designed building, said: "*Benefits include increased efficiency, offering improved working conditions for our staff, and more convenience for our customers, with superior communications which will be better for distribution.*"

PMS International was founded 23 years ago in the UK and has grown into the largest specialist company of its type in Europe, with associated but independent companies in Hong Kong, Beijing and Nanjing. The company has a delivery fleet of more than 20 vehicles and more than 3,800 products in its portfolio ranging from toys, gifts and novelties to hardware, housewares and tools.

A large proportion of PMS products are exported worldwide and are sold in theme park retail shops, used as prizes in redemption centres, and cranes.

The company's public relations department publishes its own magazines and catalogues, to keep customers up to date with their constant stream of new products. For example, PMS's soft toy catalogue alone is a whopping 160 pages - and it's just one of many catalogues.

Contact Neil Beverley on +44 702 526551 or fax, +44 702 510099

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At last year's Convention '94 in Queensland, a newcomer to the jukebox industry slipped quietly into the trade show. It was a last minute entry and the company's display was deceptively simple. The booth contained one Wurlitzer jukebox and one Rowe AMI jukebox - but there was a lot more to these machines than could be seen from the outside.

Muzicom Audio Systems was the name of the exhibitor and what they had on display was Australia's first fully computerised jukeboxes. No records. No CDs.

The fully Australian designed and built system uses the latest multimedia technology and applies it to the jukebox industry. There are no mechanical, moving parts - all the music is stored on and reproduced by a computer system.

Muzicom, the company, was established to launch the jukes just prior to the Queensland trade show but, Trevor Mc Donald, the man behind it has been developing the system since 1991. Trevor has already used the technology in other forms, including a fully computerised DJ system he has been operating for 18 months, audio libraries and home systems.

"It's applicable anywhere music is played in a commercial environment," says Trevor.

So how does the system work? Music is downloaded to the site via phone lines but only when you need to change music.

"The music is stored on a computer in the jukebox," explains Trevor. *"The traditional way to change music is to go out and load a CD, but with this system, we* _transmit_ *to the jukebox remotely from a central site."*

There are several advantages to the Muzicom system. The first is speed - the system is fully computerised so selections play immediately, one after the other, faster than a CD changer could ever be.

The jukeboxes also become more reliable because there are no moving parts, meaning there's nothing to wear out. And because the music is digitised, it reproduces perfectly each time and there are no CDs to degrade in quality over time.

Another benefit is reduced operational costs because CDs don't have to be purchased, stored and delivered to sites. The only time you need to visit your juke is to collect the takings.

Muzicom has already had interest from a large operator in Hong Kong who is also setting himself up in mainland China.

"It's a long way to drive to rotate CDs," says Trevor laughing. *"But with my system, of course, he won't have to."*

Muzicom has a full music library which they use for other purposes as well as their jukebox operations. For a small service fee Muzicom customers can have access to this library and the company has guaranteed that it will set up in any state where their Jukeboxes or kits are sold.

Muzicom also provide total site management. (*"The only thing we don't do is take their cash out for them,"* says Trevor Mc Donald). They monitor play patterns and advise operators of what songs are being played most and least.

"We analyse what's being played and what _style_ *of music. Then we can report back that this particular site is, say, predominantly a 70s music site."*

The Muzicom system can also offer more variety because music is stored by the track, not the album. Songs are individually loaded onto the system so there's no need to buy a whole CD to get two or three good tracks, you just chose the ones you want. And when you no longer earn any revenue from a track, that track can be individually removed from the system.

The essence of what Muzicom offers is the flexibility of operating "singles" with the sound quality of a compact disc.

"And it's a lot cheaper for operators," says Trevor. *"On average you would probably get three regularly played tracks on any CD so you could say it costs you about $8 per track. We only charge $2."*

Muzicom recommend that their jukeboxes be configured for 500 songs. Again, in the standard 2000 track CD juke there are probably only around 300 songs which are real revenue generators.

However, if for some reason an operator wants more songs, Muzicom can supply up to an amazing 40,000 tracks!

The other area in which the system is extremely flexible is in the actual appearance of the jukeboxes. As was demonstrated at Convention '94, the Muzicom system can be fitted to any existing jukebox or if you want a custom design, the company will build it for you.

The insides of the jukebox are replaced with Muzicom's computer system and a few small changes are made to the cabinet. A computer screen is mounted where the title selections normally appear and the control keys are replaced by large illuminated buttons.

Instead of users searching through typed lists of tracks or CD sleeves to find the music they want to select, they choose from lists displayed on the computer screen. Song titles are listed in alphabetical order or can be selected by music era

There's no need to key in the code to play a song, you just have to move the bar to the song you want and press select.

Just like everything else about the Muzicom system, it's beautifully simple. Muzicom have developed the next generation in jukebox technology: it's innovative and has the potential to make life simpler and cheaper for operators. The only question now is, will operators give it a go?

If you would like more information Muzicom Audio Systems can be contacted on: Phone: +61 (0)3 813 3574
or Fax: +61 (0)3 804 0552

Not a good picture, but this is not the ordinary Jukebox it may seem,note the MuzicomTV monitor in place of normal changer.

Redemption

ICE Inc - Cyclone

One of the most interesting games produced for some time is the new ICE Inc game, *Cyclone*, a sharp looking three player game that is quick, fun, and reported as almost addictive by independent operators of sites that tested the game.

Cyclone is also different to most redemption type games, being completely electronic, with no moving parts, but it has the simple look that is just about essential in the long term success of a redemption game.

Everyone looking at this game being played would consider they could take bucket loads of tickets out of it as all they have to do is hit the button and 'catch the light' between the arcs at their player station, it all looks so simple, but there's a bit of a problem here as *that ol' light ain't simple to catch at all.*

No way Jose

That ol' light is a frustrating SOB of a light that doesn't get caught easy, but which always leaves players confident that with a couple of more goes they'll get it all down pat and reap their just rewards.

They had better not count on doing too much 'reaping' unless the've got a bit of skill in the bones though, 'cause this is a game of skill that keeps telling players it can be beaten, while showing them in no uncertain manner, that it can't..

Little wonder that it's taking money hand over fist wherever it's put into operation.

It looks to us that ICE have kicked a goal with this game as there's no reason we can see why it's current red hot performance can't keep going for an extended period.

It seems to have everything going for it, and that includes price as on today's standards, it's very reasonably priced for a three player redemption game.

Cyclone
ICE

COASTAL AMUSEMENTS
Speedball Rally

Speedball RALLY
PROGRESSIVE BONUS

Redemption game players love a roll down game and in this latest 'roll down' from Coastal Amusements titled Speedball Rally, they have a game that throws up a pretty mean challenge to their abilities.

There's a lot more to contend with than just rolling balls down with this one as players are also playing the clock, they have to accumulate a "hundred miles" in one minute or they dip out.

With each slot in the turning table at bottom of playfield having a value in mileage, players haven't got a lot of time to study the course before, or between the rolling of the balls.

It hasn't been in the market long, but Speedball Rally has shown already it can earn good quantities of those little green blokes that rule the coin-op world.

It's a game that obviously has life and which should be more than useful in redemption centres and FEC's.

MELTEC - Cavemania

Cavemania can be linked to Meltec's Progressive Super Ticket Bonus Display, has digital sound and voice that keep the players going and all in all, looks like being around for some time.

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TAITO
Real Puncher

Real Puncher is a more of a novelty piece than it is redemption and it's probably not a game for all locations as one can't imagine mums and pops punching hell out of an amusement machine, but it can earn remarkable money in suitable sites

The big attraction to players is the image recording function that films the players face with an inbuilt CCD camera and displays it on screen.

This enables players to inflict great pain on their own images which digitally portrait that pain with each punch of any merit that is landed. Better still, if you're cunning enough you can record an enemy's face and beat the hell out of it. Either way there's a good element of fun.

Real Puncher however is a quite expensive proposition and it would pay to be sure you have the location for it.

REAL PUNCHER
REAL PUNCHER
REAL PUNCHER
TAITO

QUICK SILVER Inc
City Cats
Turbo Pusher (2)

Quick Silver Development Co of California are a company that are building quite a name for themselves in the redemption field and it seems likely that *City Cats*, their latest roll down game will further boost their stocks

City Cats addresses the kiddie side of redemption which is becoming increasingly more important as the industry moves to capture the family group as regular and enthusiastic FEC customers.

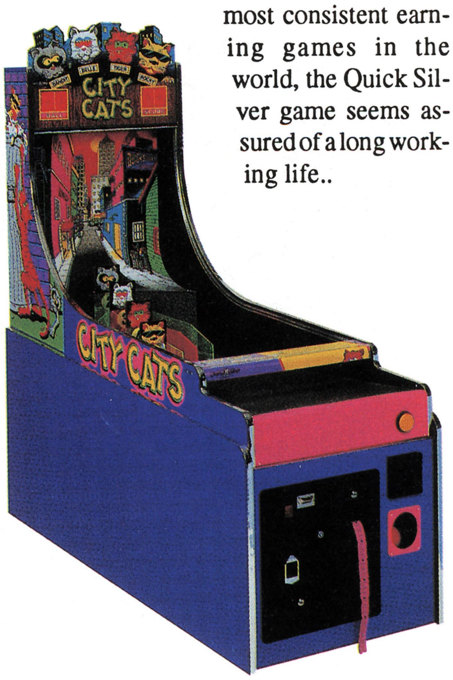
The game provides the little guys with a game like their parents are likely to play, but one that no parent could have any qualms about them playing. It's non violent, fun to play and the cute little cats will make friends wherever they go.

The game can be shipped with either a ticket dispenser or a capsule vendor which give it an extra edge and has a reasonably compact footprint.

At the other end of the scale, more into the adult market, Quick Silver have upgraded their very popular game, *Turbo Pusher*.

The changes include a quite attractive, flashing marquee, new updated sound and other modifications that are basically the 'fine tuning' of a good game which still has the unique multiplier function proven earning capabilities above average.

As it dispenses tickets and has a distinct skill element, there would be very few places that *Turbo Pusher* can not operate and with pushers holding their place among the best and most consistent earning games in the world, the Quick Silver game seems assured of a long working life..



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Redemption

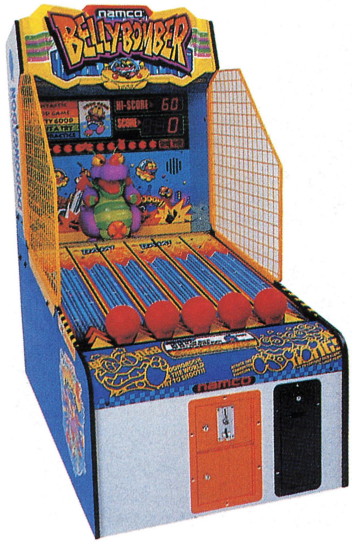
NAMCO
Belly Bomber

Belly Bomber from Namco is another good looking game from the big Japanese manufacturer that looks very much like ticking up some good results for operators in many countries.

Though a lot of redemption type games built by Japanese companies are basically only good for use in Japan, Namco always address the broader, international market with their redemption products and have had some notable successes.

The aim of *Belly Bomber* is for players to slide the balls up the table and hit the moving target in the belly, the game has the necessities of fun concept, attractive appearance and simplicity of play that are needed for a game to be successful in what is now a very competitive market, it's suitable for players of all ages and it can also be linked to a second unit to bring a bit of competition between players into play.

It also has the advantage of being a quite unique piece that will not be competing head on with similar type games and we expect it to do quite well.



MELTEC - Cavemania

Meltec have created some fine redemption games in their time and there's every chance they have another one in the roll down game, Cavemania which is tantalising players all over the USA.

The players have to time their release of the roll down balls to stop the spinning wheels on the backboard, which have cartoon like pictures of prehistoric, cave characters on them, and line up three in a row as in a slot machine.

It's a lot of fun and since it was released at the AMOA Show in San Antonio last year it has shown that it can do some very good business in redemption centres, FEC's and even arcades with limited redemption facilities.

Meltec are confident they have a long term winner in the combination of the ever popular roll down with the erstwhile 'slot' and operators of the game are inclined to agree. Though a good element of skill is required to win big on the game it has proven attractive to players of all ages, both male and female, and even the suspect ones of indefinable gender.

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New Games
& Products

Hot Memory

Tuning Electronics

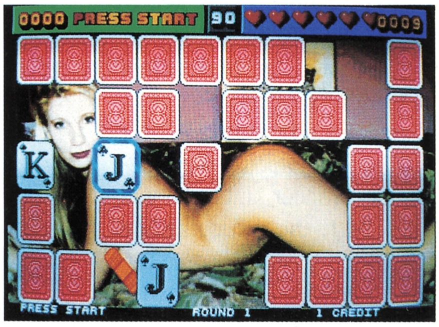
Hot Memory is a specially revised, adult version of the Strata game titled Pairs that should be ideal for operation in pubs and taverns.

One of the main changes is an increase from 11 to 44 in the number of different 'Dolly birds' that lurk behind the cards waiting to be unveiled, putting more depth and variety into the game and though they are not pornographic, among the 33 extra girlie shots there are many that display increasing amounts of flesh and leave little to the average players imagination.

In *Hot Memory*, the girls also come up in a random manner rather than in set sequence and this puts a bit more mystery into the game play.

The game has also been speeded up considerably, giving players much less time to select their pairs as it was found that game play was quite commonly stretched to 15 minutes and more, per coin, when the original game was tested in Europe.

Hot Memory is a game that should have a good life span in pubs and taverns, particularly those sites where games like Gals Panic have been successful



There's still rumours circulating about a World Rally 2 driving game that is linkable, having been completed by Gaelco of Spain, but they aren't talking and there's nothing been seen as yet

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Outlaws of the Lost Dynasty

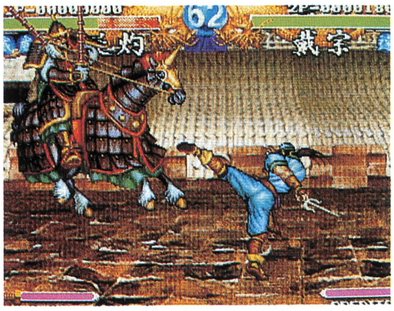
Data East

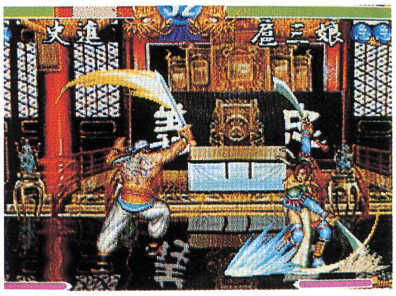
Data East have had considerable success building games for the Neo Geo system so it comes as no surprise that they have now produced a game for the new Sega "Titan" system that was released at last year's AM Show.

Titled *Outlaws of the Lost Dynasty* the game is a fighting game where the background story is one of Chinese mythology that has eleven Warlords of the distant past fighting to get free of an evil Emperors oppression.

Fighters can fight with bare knuckles or traditional Chinese weapons and have some excellent combination moves to work with, many of which result in some very comical reactions that bring a real fun element into the game.

'The graphics are great and overall, *Outlaws'* seems a pretty good game to help launch the Titan system which will obviously need good games to compete in the same market as Neo Geo and Taito's F3 Package.



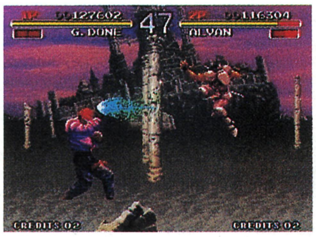


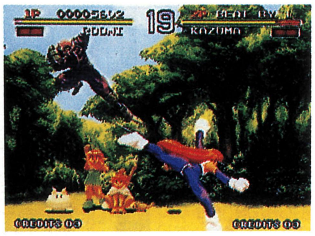
New Games & Products

Galaxy Fight
Sunsoft - Neo Geo

In *Galaxy Fight*, Sunsoft have built a Neo Geo fighting game that will prove another asset to users of the SNK system. Unlike many of the outside companies that make games for Neo Geo, Sunsoft have chosen to put the game on the bigger 100 Mega board, and the result is a game of top class graphics and action aplenty.

The "Universal Warriors" that feature in the game are a quite incredible bunch of human, part human and non human beings, that have moves and tricks coming out their ears. There's no shortage of variety in this one and players will find plenty to keep them involved in the game play.





Galaxy Fight has tested well in Japan and is now shipping internationally and we can't really see how operators could go wrong with a couple of these blokes in their Neo Geo library.

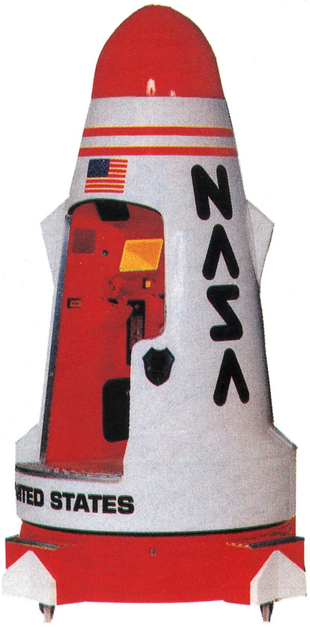
Space Rocket
RG Mitchell

Here's a great looking Kiddie Ride that should get any little guy worth his salt, yodelling for mum, dad or minder to put coin in.

The ride has rotational movement, great sound and a magical rolling screen display that will make it very hard for minders to get the kids out of, once they have got in it.

Beautifully built and decorated, Space Rocket has a small footprint on for a KR on today's standards that should make it even easier to place.

This is a piece that will earn and earn for many years.



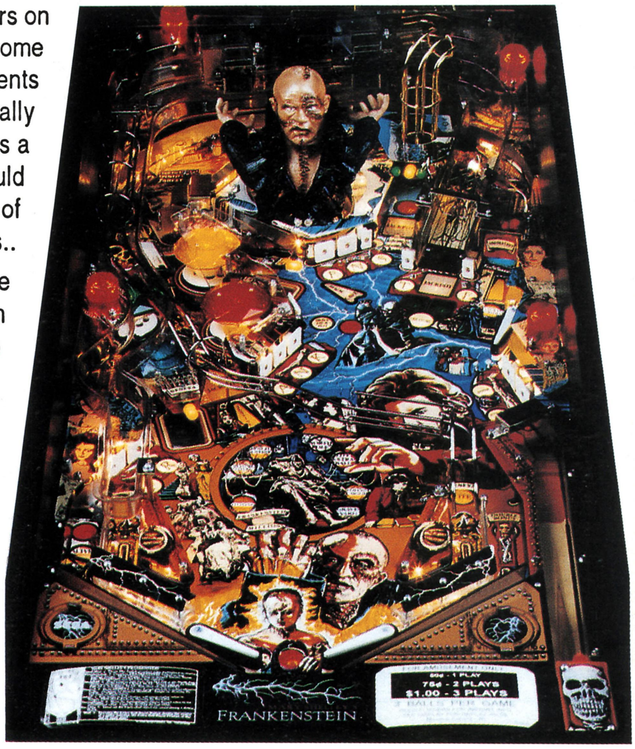
Frankenstein
Sega Pinballs

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is the first Pinball game to come out under the Sega name and they have chosen a very strong title and theme for it

Themed on the movie of the same name, the game is assured of recognition in any location and the game designers appear to have built a pretty good looking game around it.

The big Dot Matrix that was first used in *Maverick* is used again in this one and the company has crammed even more into the DM feature than they did with the former game, using new display software that seems sure to get the other manufacturers interest.

The game itself is good, it has a very 'busy' playfield, but there are plenty of shots and scoring opportunities for all types of player. Ol' Franky sits up in the centre of the playfield and keeps players on their toes with some Franky style comments and generally speaking, the games a lot of fun that should appeal to players of all ages..



The artwork on the game is superb with Robert DiNiro featuring on the backglass which was done by Paul Faris

We haven't seen any figures on *Frankenstein* yet, but hear it has tested quite well in the USA in arcade type locations.

New Games & Products

Kyle Hodgetts of Tickets 'n Things is reportedly setting up shop back in his home country of Australia after repeated attempts to establish himself in the USA over recent years. Word is that he and his family will set up in Queensland as early as this month and carry on developing games.

World Cup Volleyball '95

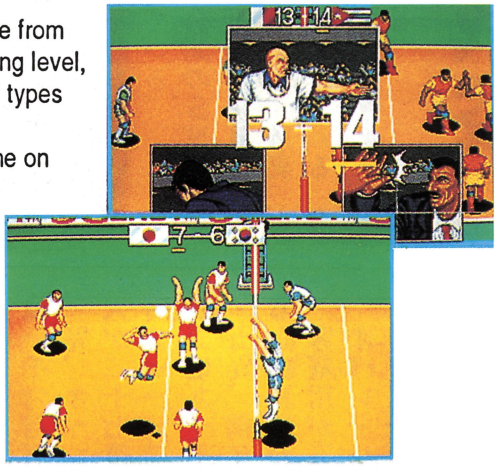
Data East Corp

Data East have come up with another good looking sports game in *World Cup Volleyball* that players are showing quite a bit of interest in.

The game looks good on screen where it's presented in the same style as the game is shown on TV, and combined with the very good moves that are available to players it produces a far better simulation of the sport than any previous Volleyball games have achieved.

Players have 12 national teams to choose from and the four levels of difficulty provided, Training level, Amateur, Semi Pro and Pro, give players of all types an opportunity to enjoy the game and get progressively better at it. Players control of the on screen characters is very good with only three buttons and joystick being needed to cover all plays of the game.

World Cup Volleyball has tested very well in Japan and shown an ability to keep players coming back. It's a very competitive game that appears to have every chance of attracting a good following and being quite successful



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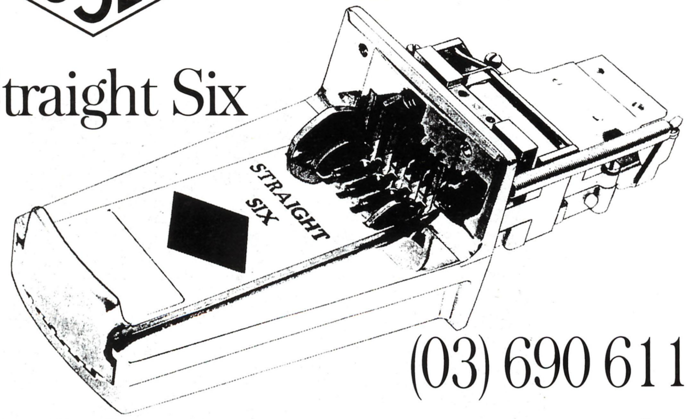

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UPDATE

Chase Bombers Taito

It's a bit surprising to us that this fun game from Taito appears to have made very little impression on the market.

We get the impression that operators expect the game to match *Daytona* or *Ridge Racer* in takings and that seems a bit silly as *Chase Bombers* is designed for the 'fun driving' type of player rather than the 'motorhead'

Placed accordingly the game can provide good additional income to arcades and FEC's, and will compliment their bigger, more flashy driving games which have to earn a whole lot more to cover their much higher purchase price.

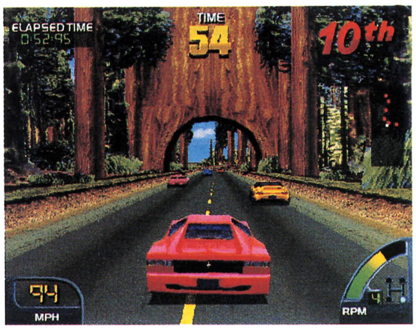
Chase Bombers is OK, it's a heap of fun to play, looks good, handles well and there's a lot of evidence out there in the shape of Out Runner machines that prove there's a large section of the market that like the fun driving machines.

Chase Bombers
Chase Bombers
CRUSH!
TAITO

New Games & Products

UPDATE Cruis'n USA

Now that it's been out in the market for a while, it's quite obvious that Cruis'n USA is a pretty good game and though no one ever really doubted that, it's always good to see the players agree with a game assessment and put their money in it.



Cruis'n USA
MIDWAY

But also, as was expected, Cruis'n USA has shown that it's not in Daytona class and Midway's failure to deliver the promised linking system hasn't helped the games cause in competing against the Daytona Twin.

However, you do have to take everything into account and except for the De Luxe simulator, Cruis'n USA is considerably cheaper than Daytona and is showing almost equally as good an ROI as the Japanese game in most places, while in some, it's performing better.

Takings also appear to be very consistent and this augurs well for the long term viability of the game.

Verdict: Providing Midway can soon get the linking into play, Cruis'n USA should prove a good investment in the majority of markets and naturally enough it will do a whole lot better if there's no Daytona's in the immediate vicinity.

It hasn't quite lived up to the hype that surrounded it's launch, but few games ever reach the levels the "Hypesters" yodelling reaches, and we've had to learn to live with that.

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New Games & Products

International Games Systems of Taiwan, makers of the gun game Lord of Gun and the PCB fighting game that's doing quite well, Aliens Challenge, are reportedly working on a major amusement game project that will surprise many in the industry. The company has recently released a "soft" gamer, titled Boat Racewhich is doing well, but this new project is 100% amusement.

P-47 Aces

Jaleco Ltd

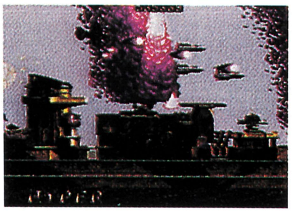
The original *P-47* game could hardly be called a hit though it did prove quite handy in some regions and probably shouldn't be tagged as a 'dud' either. Jaleco are much more optimistic about this new game which has apparently shown them some very good figures in early testing.

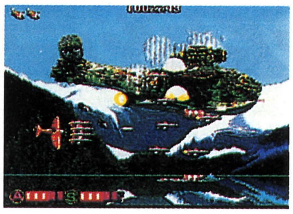
The game is on the company's big Mega System 32 board and accordingly, both the graphics and depth of game play are much better than what was in the previous game. Players have good control, good weaponry and a lot of play options that make the game interesting appealing to play.

There's no shortage of action in the game with land, sea and air missions to get through and the players need to keep their wits about them at all times or they will be going down in a screaming heap with the fateful "Game Over" flashing up on the screen in pretty quick time.

Generally *P-47 Aces* looks to be very well thought out and put together game that deserves a decent response from players..

However it's seldom that games of this type can take and hold a big slice of the market and with the Raiden games out there building a cult following of immense proportions, we'd have to think that *P-47 Aces* is going to do it a bit tough trying to pull players away from them, and achieve better than average results.





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GAME RATINGS

Japan

VIDEO CONVERSION

1	Virtua Fighter 2
2	Tekken
3	Samurai Shodown 2
4	Virtua Fighter
5	Bubble Symphony
6	V Goal Soccer
7	King of Fighters '94
8	Gunbird

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Virtua Fighter 2
2	Ace Driver
3	Sports Fishing
4	Ridge Racer 2
5	Virtua Cop
6	Point Blank
7	Daytona Twin
8	Wing War

PINBALLS

1	Star Trek
2	Tales from Crypt
3	Royal Rumble
4	Addams Family
5	Jurassic Park

Hong Kong

VIDEO CONVERSION

1	Tekken
2	Bubble Symphony
3	Mad Shark
4	V-Goal Soccer
5	World Cup '94
6	King of Fighters '94
7	Raiden DX
8	Street Hoop

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Daytona
2	Virtua Cop
3	Virtua Fighter 2
4	Gunbullet (Point Blank)

PINBALLS

1	Maverick
2	Guns 'n Roses
3	World Challenge Soccer

United States

VIDEO UPRIGHT

1	Lethal Enforcers II
2	Virtua Fighter
3	Revolution X
4	Raiden DX
5	Samurai Shodown
6	King of Fighters '94
7	Street Hoop
8	Alien Challenge

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Daytona USA
2	Ridge Racer
3	Cruis'n USA
4	T-Mek
5	Out Runners
6	Suzuka 8 Hours II
7	Fast Draw Showdown
8	Air Combat

PINBALLS

1	Freddy Krueger
2	Star Trek
3	Addams Family
4	World Cup Soccer
5	Guns 'n Roses
6	Flintstones
7	Corvette
8	Rescue 911

Germany

VIDEO CONVERSION

1	Raiden II
2	Taito Cup Finals
3	Raiden DX
4	Street Hoop

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Daytona Twin
2	Ridge Racer DX
3	Cruis'n USA
4	Killer Instinct

PINBALLS

1	Shaq Attaq
2	Freddy Krueger
3	Road Show
4	World Cup Soccer

Australia

VIDEO CONVERSION

1	Raiden DX
2	King of Fighters '94
3	Street Hoop
4	Raiden II
5	Samurai Shodown 2
6	Virtua Fighter
7	Bubble Symphony
8	Super Sidekicks 2

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Daytona Twin
2	Virtua Fighter 2
3	Virtua Cop
4	Ridge Racer DX
5	Daytona USA DX
6	Cruis'n USA
7	Suzuka 8 Hours 2
8	Lethal Enforcers II

PINBALLS

1	Shaq Attaq
2	Freddy Krueger
3	Star Trek
4	Guns 'n Roses
5	World Cup Soccer
6	Addams Family
7	Maverick
8	Flintstones

United Kingdom

VIDEO CONVERSION

1	Raiden II
2	King of Fighters '94
3	Taito Cup Finals
4	Samurai Shodown
5	Dark Stalker
6	Great 1000 Mile Rally
7	SFII Turbo
8	Super Sidekicks 2

DEDICATED VIDEO

1	Daytona Twin
2	Ridge Racer DX
3	Daytona DX
4	Ridge Racer 2
5	Lethal Enforcers 2
6	Suzuka 8 Hours 2
7	Virtua Fighter
8	Out Runners

PINBALLS

1	Freddy Krueger
2	World Cup Soccer
3	Road Show
4	Guns 'n Roses
5	Star Trek
6	Flintstones
7	Addams Family

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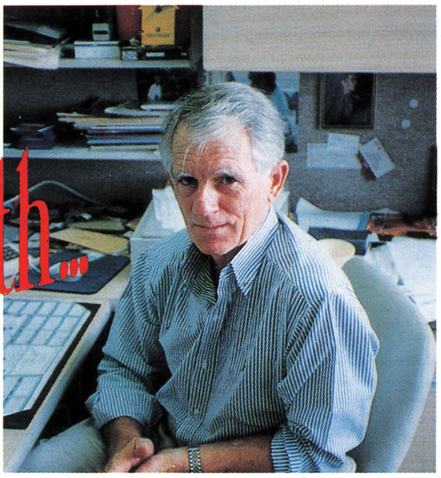

I've never been a fan of motor cars, hate all of them in fact (except when they're on a Ridge Racer or Daytona screen) I long ago found that there was no future in a carpenter fiddling with the wretched things and have had a life long policy that is simple and effective.......... *whilever they work when I turn them on, I won't take an axe to them or sell them to some deranged car lover.*

I just had a dreadful week at the office almost unbelievable and truly bad withthe old Murphy's Law totally in command. I contemplated necking myself at least eleven times, but every time I got ready to throw the old rope over the rafters, another disaster happened and I'd forget where I was up to. ("Uncle Al", better known as Alzheimers disease comes in handy now and again)

In the middle of this rotten week I had a touch of car trouble.

Driving to work I heard some strange rattling noises coming from the motor of my cherished "Roller". I called in to my mechanics place to find a note in the window saying he wouldn't be in till late.

So I have a listen to the noise and without lifting the bonnet (editors are not allowed to lift bonnets of motor cars) I diagnose it as tappet noise, and definitely not 'meaty' enough to be deep in the motor. So I drive it on to work.

Now this car is a story on it's own, you see in 1989 (when I had money) my accountant of the day, whose long since got the flick, told me that I had to get rid of a $1000 a month *"Go out and lease a good car"* said he

So I toddled out and leased a 450 V8 Mercedes for $50,000. The fact that I bought at the very top of the market while interest rates were at their highest point in history was just one of those things, it was $1000 a month and it was a pretty swish looking set of wheels. Three weeks after I bought it the rotten thing depreciated $15,000 when the Government reduced Sales Tax on prestige vehicles, but I didn't get too upset about it. I had my 'Roller' and every time I turned the key, it ticked over.

So this is the beast that I'm driving to work in. The rattle seems to be OK, but after rounding a corner and accelerating a bit , it went splat,..........and blew it's guts all over the highway. *Obviously a bad diagnosis, I'd been listening to the bloody death rattle*

I lock it up, get a cab to work and arrange to have it towed to the garage where they are now at work, and where the mechanic calmly tells me it's dead, *completely dead*, and with a flapping great hole in the side of it, irreparable. New motor required.

But where do you get a new motor for a 10 year old Benz? Everyone I ring tells me *" Those motors don't blow up, no one carries them, it would have to come from Germany"*

How much ? Try $7000 for a second hand one with no guarantee or $22,000 for a new one, and all plus import costs.

A possible $30,000 to put a new motor in a car that's also got terminal cancer in the bodywork (you wouldn't believe the number of experts that have told me Mercedes don't rust) and was worth at least $15000 less than the upcoming residual, before it blew it's guts

After two days of chasing around for a motor, the rope was over the rafter again and the knot almost ready when my eldest daughter rang for a lend of my golf clubs that were in the boot of the dead Benz.

To cut a long story short, on going to the garage to get them, she found they weren't in the boot at all. Some dirty rotten low life, probably in the shape of a tow truck driver, had lifted them.

And that brings us to the moral of this story, it's not *"Don't listen to accountants when they tell you to buy a good car"* nor is it *"magazine editors weren't meant to drive a Benz"* it's simply this................ *when your beloved Benz blows it's guts all over the highway, remember to get those golf clubs out of the boot*

Now Uncle Al, where did I put that bloody rope?

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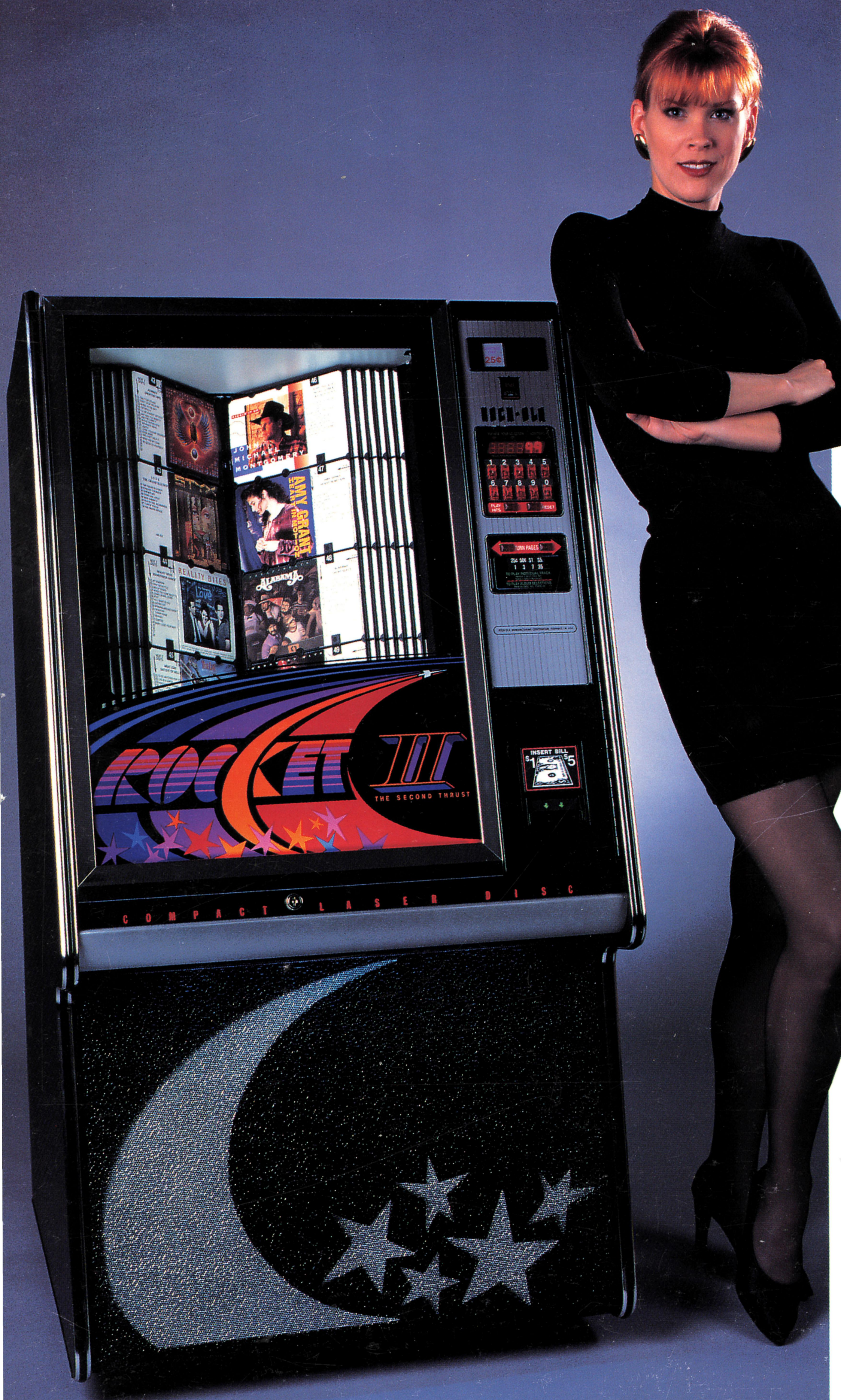
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